

THOROLD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA ASSOCIATION  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>		
POLICY NO: 100-02 REVISED: Nov. 20, 2017	ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY	PAGE 1 OF 10

**ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

**In Compliance with AODA O. Reg. 429/07 and O. Reg. 191/11**

**Index**

1	Purpose of Policy .....	3
2	Statement of Commitment .....	3
3	Definitions .....	3
4	Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Progress Reports .....	5
5	Accessible Customer Service Policy	
5.1	How the BIA Provides Services .....	5
5.2	Assistive Devices .....	5
5.3	Service Animals .....	6
5.4	Support Persons .....	6
5.5	Notice of Temporary Disruptions .....	6
6	Information and Communication Policy	
6.1	Emergency Procedures, Plans and Public Safety Information .....	7
6.2	Availability of Information in Alternate Format .....	7
6.3	Website Accessibility .....	7
7	Employment Policy	
7.1	Workplace Emergency Response Information .....	7
7.2	Individualized Emergency Response Plans for Municipal Staff .....	8
7.3	Applicant Accommodation in Recruitment and Selection .....	8
7.4	Notice of Accommodation Availability to Employees .....	8
7.5	Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees .....	8
7.6	Individualized Accommodation Plans .....	8
7.7	Return-to-Work Accommodation Plans .....	8
7.8	Accommodation in Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement and Re-deployment.....	9

8	Training.....	9
9	Feedback Process.....	10
10	Availability of Documents.....	10
11	Policy Review Process.....	10

## **1 POLICY PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy implements the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces), Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

## **2 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

The BIA is committed to providing excellent customer service to all its citizens. The BIA is committed to compliance with AODA and its accessibility standards. The BIA shall provide accessibility and accommodation for persons with disabilities through AODA's customer service standard, integrated accessibility standard and all other standards as they are developed, and in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Accessibility Policy sets out the responsibilities of all persons in the employ of the BIA and those serving the BIA in an appointed capacity.

## **3 DEFINITIONS**

“ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS” means captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“ACCESSIBLE FORMATS” means large print, clear text, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“BIA” means the Thorold Business Improvement Area Association

“DISABILITY” means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness, or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

The definition includes disabilities that are non-visible, are temporary, may be intermittent or have varying degrees of severity. Information about any person's disability is personal and private and must be treated confidentially.

“EXTRANET WEBSITE” means a controlled extension of the intranet, or internal network of an organization to outside users over the Internet;

“INTERNET WEBSITE” means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public;

“INTRANET WEBSITE” means an organization’s internal website that is used to privately and securely share any part of the organization’s information or operational systems within the organization and includes extranet websites;

“NEW INTERNET WEBSITE” means either a website with a new domain name or a website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh;

“NEW INTRANET WEBSITE” means either an intranet website with a new domain name or an intranet website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh.

“GUIDE DOG” means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights Act*.

“MEDICAL AID” means an assistive device including respirators and portable oxygen supplies.

“MOBILITY ASSISTIVE DEVICE” means a cane, walker or similar aid.

“PERSONAL ASSISTIVE DEVICES” means any aids including communication, cognition, and personal mobility, medical or technical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to: wheelchairs, walkers, speech synthesizers, TTYs (Telephone Typewriters or Telephone Teletypes), computer technologies, canes and hearing devices.

“PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT” means activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success.

“REDEPLOYMENT” means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.

“SERVICE ANIMAL” means an animal that is of service to a person with a disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability. Verification of a service animal’s status can be provided by way of government certification or by a letter from a registered health professional confirming the animal is required for reasons relating to the person’s disability. Regulated health professionals who are eligible to provide this documentation include: an audiologist, speech-language pathologist, chiropractor, nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, registered psychotherapist, registered mental health therapist, physician or surgeon.

“SUPPORT PERSON” means any one person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

“VOLUNTEER” means a person who freely chooses to provide services to the BIA without being remunerated or paid for such service in any way. A volunteer is not required to give, or entitled to receive any notice to terminate the volunteer relationship.

#### **4 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS**

The BIA will draft and make public a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to address compliance requirements of O. Reg. 191/11. The Multi-Year Plan will replace the BIA’s Annual Accessibility Plan and will be made public by January 1, 2013. The BIA will also draft and make public annual progress reports outlining steps taken to meet the goals and objectives of the Multi-Year Plan. The Multi-Year Plan Progress Report will be made public by January 1 of each year.

#### **5 ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

##### 5.1 HOW THE BIA PROVIDES SERVICES

- The BIA will listen to, be courteous, and treat all citizens with dignity and respect at all times;
- The BIA will take the initiative to understand the needs of each individual in order to provide effective and efficient service every time;
- The BIA will provide people with disabilities with equal service. If this is not possible or is cost prohibitive, the BIA will provide choices and options regarding how the BIA provides services and will work with customers to find acceptable and workable alternatives;
- The BIA will take the initiative to identify and prevent problem situations up front and propose workable alternatives;
- The BIA shall take reasonable steps to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. The BIA shall also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public on behalf of the BIA are properly trained in how to communicate with guests with various types of disabilities.

##### 5.2 ASSISTIVE DEVICES

People with disabilities will be permitted to access, use and/or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event a person utilizing an assistive device cannot access BIA goods or services, the BIA will accommodate the customer by using any other temporary measures available and deemed appropriate.

### 5.3 SERVICE ANIMALS

Certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all BIA facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except where prohibited by law (such as where food preparation is being undertaken).

**If you cannot easily identify that the animal is a service animal, you can ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional. The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability. Regulated health professionals who are eligible to provide this documentation include:**

- **A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.**
- **A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.**

### 5.4 SUPPORT PERSONS

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all BIA facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except when there are fees applied against participants by a third party leasing or renting the facility.

**The fees for a support person who is assisting a person with a disability that is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others will have all fees waived if applicable.**

The BIA shall provide notice of any fee(s) applicable to support persons accompanying a person with disability when accessing goods and services.

### 5.5 NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS

In the event that a temporary service disruption occurs which would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to the goods and service, the BIA and City of Thorold will post notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods/places:

- **Website; and**
- **Notice on all facility entrances where the disruption has occurred; and**
- **Notification by Staff (where applicable);**

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to deliver the goods and service, if available such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- If appropriate or required, deliver the goods and service to the person's place of residence; or
- Any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

All notices of disruption shall include:

- The name of the event/service; **and**
- The normal service location being impacted; **and**
- Alternate service locations; **and**
- Alternate service methods; **and**
- Hours of service availability; **and**
- Contact information; **and**
- Any other information which impacts the delivery of goods and services.

## **6 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **6.1 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, PLANS AND PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION**

BIA staff will be trained in emergency response policies and procedures as they relate to people with disabilities, including how to communicate emergency information, and how to offer evacuation assistance to people with disabilities, identifying accessible and safe evacuation routes.

### **6.2 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION IN ALTERNATE FORMAT**

BIA information will be made available to the public and in an accessible format or via accessible communication support upon request. Timeframes for this information will be dependent upon the format requested but will be provided as soon as is practicable.

### **6.3 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY**

Beginning January 1, 2014, any new website design, new internet website or intranet website, or web-based applications that the BIA controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of a product will also conform to W3C WCAG 2.0 Level A.

## **7 EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

### **7.1 WORKPLACE EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION**

Workplace Emergency procedures, plans and safety information will be made available to

staff in an accessible format or via accessible communication support upon request. Timeframes for this information will be dependent upon the format requested but will be provided as soon as is practicable.

## 7.2 INDIVIDUALIZED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS FOR BIA STAFF

BIA staff with disabilities who may require assistance in an emergency situation are encouraged to identify their accessibility needs to their immediate supervisor so that individualized emergency accommodation plans can be created. Individualized plans will be created using the BIA's template. This information will be maintained confidentially.

## 7.3 APPLICANT ACCOMMODATION IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The BIA will make accommodation available in its recruitment process to applicants with disabilities upon request. Applicants will also be accommodated when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process.

The BIA will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment and selection processes. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the BIA will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation.

## 7.4 NOTICE OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY TO EMPLOYEES

The BIA will notify successful applicants of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

The BIA will also notify its employees of its policies for providing job accommodations. Employees will be provided updated information whenever there is a change to existing policies.

## 7.5 ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYEES

The BIA will ensure all employees have information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace. When an employee with a disability requests accessible formats or communication supports, the BIA will consult with the employee and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation.

## 7.6 INDIVIDUALIZED ACCOMMODATION PLANS

The BIA shall create and use a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

## 7.7 RETURN-TO-WORK ACCOMMODATION PLANS



The BIA shall create and use a written process for the development of return-to-work individual accommodation plans for employees returning to work who have been absent due to a disability and who now require accommodation in order to resume work.

#### 7.8 ACCOMMODATION IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT AND RE-DEPLOYMENT

The BIA will ensure its performance management, career development and advancement opportunities and redeployment process is accessible to employees with disabilities. When an employee with a disability requests accessible formats or communication supports, the BIA will consult with the employee and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation.

### **8 TRAINING**

All employees and agents of the BIA who are in direct contact with the public (e.g. face-to-face or telephone communication) shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery and integrated accessibility standards.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA;
- Overview of Accessible Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, including provision of alternate formats;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Overview of the BIA's obligation to provide information in alternate formats and alternate communication supports upon request including:
  - Review of different types of alternate formats
  - Review of alternate communication supports (sign language, gestures, boards with symbols, voice-synthesizers, etc.)
  - Review of BIA's alternate format service provider and process relating to securing information in alternate formats
  - Review of tracking system used for alternate formats upon request (as required)
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Overview of Ontario Building Code accessibility updates
- Overview of Design of Public Spaces Standard requirements
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing BIA services.

In addition to the above customer service training, management and supervisory staff will be trained in the Recruitment and Hiring Policy requirements and procedures (accessible recruitment and screening and accommodation planning training) as well as our obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Training shall be mandatory for all employees upon their initial indoctrination and every 3 years thereafter.

## **9 FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or otherwise. **The BIA will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports, on request when requesting or receiving feedback from people with disabilities.**

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or:

**Thorold Business Improvement Area Association**  
**Att: Secretary** **TBIAsecretary@gmail.com**

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service.

The Responsible Officer for the Accessible Customer Service Policy will acknowledge concerns within five (5) business days and will respond in a timely manner with information regarding how the issue will be addressed.

The BIA will make every effort to understand the problem, identify the appropriate contact and work towards a resolution.

In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in a format identified as accessible to him or her.

## **10 AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

This policy and any other document deemed to be key in the delivery of goods and services will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the BIA's website, and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services using any other method or format as are reasonable in the circumstances.

## **11 POLICY REVIEW PROCESS**

This policy will be reviewed as required by appropriate BIA staff. However, the review process may be affected by AODA Regulations as they are announced. Therefore, this policy will also be reviewed upon announcement of any new Accessibility Standards of the AODA, 2005 to ensure integration and consistency with this policy. The policy may be modified to ensure full compliance with the AODA, 2005.