



**THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF LAC DU BONNET
POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Policy Name: Accessible Customer Service Policy	Policy Number: ADMIN-2024-01
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1) PURPOSE

The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet is 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 integration, independence, dignity, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities as presented in our Accessibility Plan.

2) APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, management, and council in the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet.

3) POLICY STATEMENT

The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with all disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

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

4) COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Policy Statement:

We meet the communication needs of our ratepayers, residents, and visitors.

Practices and Measures:

- a) 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.
- b) We use an Access Offer sign with disability icons to let people know we can offer service in different ways.
- c) We also:
 - i) Keep paper and pens available to write things down.
 - ii) Offer a chair when longer conversations are needed.
 - iii) Offer a quieter space.
 - iv) Sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair.
 - v) Keep a magnifier sheet to enlarge images and documents if needed.
- d) All our publications include the statement: "This publication is available in alternate formats on request." We also specify how a person can request an alternate format.
- e) 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.
- f) We write signs and documents in plain language.
- g) We record Council meetings so they can be viewed and listened to at our patron's convenience.

5) ACCOMMODATE THE USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Policy Statement:

We accommodate the use of assistive devices when ratepayers, residents, and visitors are accessing our programs, services, and facilities.

Practice and Measures:

- a) We do not touch or move ratepayers, residents, or visitors' assistive devices without permission.
- b) We are trained in how to use assistive devices that we provide including:
 - i) Automatic doors
 - ii) Digital media
 - iii) Microphones
 - iv) Magnifier sheets

- c) In cases where the assistive devices present significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with disabilities can access our programs, services, and facilities (i.e., magnifier sheet to view documents if laptop is not available.)

6) WELCOME SUPPORT PERSONS

Policy Statement:

We welcome support persons and we let the public know in advance if support persons must pay service fees.

Practices and Measures:

- a) We address the ratepayer, resident, or visitor not the support person, unless requested by ratepayer, resident, or visitor to do otherwise.
- b) We make space for support persons on-site and ensure ratepayers, residents or visitors always have access to their support persons.
- c) We Waive service fees for support persons.
- d) We let the public know in advance if service fees can not be waived.
- e) We share information about fees for support persons with the public in the following ways:
 - i) Posted on our website, social media and in/or the local newspaper.
 - ii) Posted at our building entrance, counter, or service reception desk, and or high traffic areas.
 - iii) Included in posters, brochures, pamphlets, and/or advertisements.
 - iv) Through employees, volunteers, and management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)

7) ALLOW SERVICE ANIMALS

Policy Statement:

We allow service animals in all areas available for public access.

Practices and Measures:

- a) We:
 - i) Treat a service animal as a working animal.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) Know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing.

- b) If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a person with a disability-related need.
- c) We do not inquire about the disability.
- d) We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal, or other means.
- e) If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining, or wandering), we may provide warning to the handler to control the animal.
- f) If the service animals continue to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.
- g) If another law prohibits service animals (i.e., food preparation areas), we explain why the animal cannot enter the space and discuss with the person another way of providing goods or services.

8) **MAINTAIN ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES**

Policy Statement:

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

Practices and Measures:

- a) We organize our space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters, and walkers.
- b) Our seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- c) We keep our hallways, aisles, entrance, and reception areas, waiting areas, and Council Chambers clear of clutter.
- d) We keep our entrance area clear of ice and snow.
- e) We place standing signs out of the way to avoid tripping hazards.
- f) We use both audio and visual cues to inform ratepayers, residents, or visitors it is their turn to be served.
- g) We take our programs and services to the ratepayers, residents, or visitors when our premises or structures are not accessible.
- h) Alternatives to our accessibility features include:
 - i) Online services
 - ii) Over the phone services
 - iii) Accessible meeting rooms
- i) Our accessibility features affected by this policy include building entrance access, meeting rooms, Council Chambers, accessible washroom, automatic doors, and ramps.

9) LET THE PUBLIC KNOW WHEN AND WHY AN ACCESSIBLE 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 programs and services.

Practice and Measures:

- a) If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we prepare and post a notice 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 programs and services (i.e., by using an alternate entrance)
- b) If requested, we work with the ratepayer, resident, or visitor to find other ways to provide programs and services.
- c) We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways:
 - i) Posted on our website, social media platforms and in the newspaper.
 - ii) Posted at our building entrance, counter, or reception desk, and/or other high traffic areas.
 - iii) Included in posters, and other advertisements.
 - iv) Through employees, volunteers, council or management (in person, by phone or e-mail)

10) WELCOME AND RESPOND PROMPTLY TO FEEDBACK

Policy Statement:

We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our programs and 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:

- a) We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - i) Visit our reception desk or contact us by phone, email, website, or Service Tracker Feedback form.
 - ii) All feedback is directed to the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet Accessibility Working Group and the Accessibility Coordinator who determines what action, if any, should occur.
 - iii) If the feedback requires us to follow up, the ratepayer, resident or visitor is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.

- iv) We let the ratepayer, resident or visitor know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- v) We respond to feed back in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

11) PROVIDE THE REQUIRED TRAINING TO EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND MANAGEMENT

Policy Statement:

We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers, council, and management. We are trained on:

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

Practices and Measures:

- a) We train new employees, volunteers, council, and management within 3 months after hiring.
- b) We provide refresher training annually which, includes updates to policies, practices, and measures.
- c) The Payroll/Human Resources Clerk maintains records of employees who have completed the training, and the date of training was received.
- d) Feedback on the accessibility of our goods and services is addressed at staff meetings.

12) KEEP A WRITTEN RECORD OF ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAINING POLICIES

Policy Statement:

We keep a written record of our accessibility and training policies. We have an Accessibility Plan that outlines our barriers and goals and policies to carry out our Accessibility Plan. We let the public know that our written policies are available upon request and can be found on our website.

Practices and Measures:

- a) We let the public know that our accessibility and training policies are available in the following ways:

- i) Posted on our website, in the same section where our Accessibility Plan and Policies are located.
 - ii) Posted at our Administrative Office entrance, reception area and any other high traffic areas.
 - iii) Through employees, volunteers, council, or management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)
- b) We provide our policies within a reasonable timeframe, at no cost and in a format that meets the needs of the individual.

13) WE MAKE OUR PUBLIC EVENTS ACCESSIBLE

Policy Statement:

We take reasonable steps to make our public events accessible in four areas: publicizing, meeting spaces, meeting participant needs, and letting the public know that relevant accommodations can be made on request.

Public events include meetings, hearings, open houses, and consultations.

Practices and Measures:

- a.) We let the public know that our public events are accessible. Should ratepayers, residents and visitors require accommodations, they can request this in the following ways:
- i) Posted on our website, on social media, and in/or the local newspaper.
 - ii) Posted on our building entrance, reception desk and/or high traffic areas.
 - iii) Through employees, volunteers, council, or management (in person, by phone or e-mail).



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