



RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF EAST ST. PAUL

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Plan

2018 – 2020

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

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RM Overview

The RM of East St. Paul serves people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. As the municipal government, all programs and civic amenities are of concern to the broader population; those who work, live and do business within the community. Our stakeholders also include employees who work, and people that visit or conduct business within our buildings, facilities and on our properties.

There are three distinct departments within the RM; Administration, Operations and Fire Department. Each area contributed to the development of this Accessible Customer Service Plan and shares responsibility to continue and or carry out the identified actions.

Like many other municipalities, a large portion of our population is aging. With this demographic comes an enhanced responsibility to ensure our services and information is fully accessible.

As the RM grows, we are committed to ensuring an attitude and environment of inclusion for everyone.

Vision, Accessibility Commitment & Customer Service Statements

Vision Statement

East St. Paul is a distinctive rural community with urban advantages dedicated to maintaining a safe, inclusive environment with a superior level of public service.

Accessibility Commitment Statement

The RM of East St. Paul commits to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We commit to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion.

We commit to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

Customer Service Statement

The RM of East St. Paul will provide quality accessible services to residents and all stakeholders by preventing and eliminating barriers; offering equal access for all.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

Introduction

The Accessible Customer Service Standard is “a regulation under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. It outlines what public and private organizations must do, and by when, to provide goods and services in a fair and respectful manner to all customers, including people disabled by barriers.”

The Customer Service Standard Regulation came into force on November 1, 2015. Smaller municipalities must have a plan in place by November 01, 2018. Additionally, organizations with more than twenty employees must document the steps they are taking to comply with the Accessibility Standard in Customer Service including staff training and other actions.

The Customer Service Standard Regulation identifies the meaning of accessible customer service as when “all persons who are reasonably expected to seek to obtain, to use or benefit from a good or service have the same opportunity to obtain, use of benefit from the good or service.”

The RM of East St. Paul commits to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and will continue to prioritize actions that remove barriers impacting accessible customer service.

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Action Plans

Meet Communication Needs by;

- Ensuring communication with a person disabled by a barrier is done in a way that removes the barrier.
- Offering to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things aloud, and taking the time necessary to fully explain things.
- Offering a chair for longer conversations and sitting down when providing service to someone who uses a wheelchair.
- Using signs and documents that are easy to read, using larger fonts and colour contrasts.
- Training staff to communicate clearly, using easy to read fonts and in plain language.
- Including in RM publications a statement indicating it is “available in alternative formats on request.”

Accommodate the Use of Assistive Devices by;

- Welcoming the use of assistive devices to remove or reduce barriers.
- Ensuring staff are trained to use the RM’s assistive devices such as automatic doors, and where appropriate trained to assist with citizens’/customers’ devices such as wheelchairs, communication or hearing devices and other such devices.

Welcome Support Persons by;

- Understanding a support person may enter and remain with our customer and/or stakeholder while we provide information and or services.
- Ensuring staff address the citizen/customer, not the support person, unless requested to do otherwise.
- Making space for the support person on-site, ensuring the citizen/customer has access to the support person at all times.
- Making efforts to avoid charges for a support person when possible. If there is an admission fee for a support person, we will give advance notice to the

customer/citizen/stakeholder via the RM's website, social media and or in the RM newsletter.

Welcome People with Service Animals by;

- Understanding people with service animals may enter our facilities in areas where the public, customers or guests are generally allowed.
- Training staff how to interact with a person accompanied by a service animal, ensuring 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,
 - Expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.

Maintain Barrier-Free Access of RM Physical Space by;

- Organizing facilities (hallways, aisles, entrances, reception areas, washrooms, waiting and meeting rooms) so there is room for people who use wheelchairs, electric scooters, walkers and other equipment.
- Ensuring seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- Keeping entrances free from ice and snow.
- Ensuring accessibility features can be used as intended; keeping automatic doors working properly, keeping waiting areas, hallways and other spaces free from clutter and obstructions.

Offer Accessible Events by;

- Announcing events in a manner that is accessible.
- Holding events in accessible meeting places.
- Inviting requests for reasonable accommodations.

Inform the public when and why an accessibility feature is unavailable by;

- Posting a notice (via the website, social media, through employees' during meetings/phone calls/emails, as hardcopy posters at the affected facility).

The information will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

- Working with the citizen/customer, where requested, to find other ways to provide the information/service.

Welcome and Respond to Feedback Promptly by;

- Encouraging feedback at reception areas and also by telephone, email, and/or through the RM's website.
- Directing all feedback received to the appropriate person to determine what action, if any, is required.
- Informing citizens/customers when action has been taken, or why the feedback did not result in a change.
- Responding to the feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

Provide the Required Training to Staff and Management by;

- Arranging for a subject matter expert to deliver classroom training on:
 - How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers.
 - Assisting people who use communication devices and or a service animal.
 - An overview of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the Human Rights Code, and the Customer Service Standard.
- Training new employees within one-year of hire.
- Providing refresher training every three years
- Sharing citizen/customer feedback regarding accessibility with employees.

Keep Written Record of Accessibility and Training Actions by;

- Summarizing accessibility actions taken and accessibility training (including a summary of the training provided).
- Monitoring and advising the public of our progress (via the RM's website, social media, and/or newsletter).

CONCLUSION

The RM of East St. Paul is proud of its accomplishments in identifying, removing and preventing accessibility barriers for our customers; residents, employees, business associates and visitors. We will continue to strive to make our community as inclusive, barrier-free and welcoming as possible.

We also understand and are committed to the ongoing, evolving process of preventing and removing barriers to customer service. The RM of East St. Paul will continue to meet or exceed standards set out by the Manitoba Accessibilities Act.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN
AUTHORIZATION

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Authorized by;

Sheila Mowat

Chief Administrative Officer

Oct. 17, 2018

Date

Shelley Hart

Shelley Hart, Mayor

December 11, 2018

Date

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD for CUSTOMER SERVICE

REFERENCE INFORMATION

[RM of East St. Paul Website – Accessibility Page](#)

[The Province of Manitoba’s Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#)

[The Province of Manitoba’s Customer Service Standard Regulation](#)