



“Where Opportunity Drives Success”

The Rural Municipality of Rockwood 2017 – 2018 Accessibility Plan

Statement of Commitment

The Rural Municipality of Rockwood is committed to providing the services it provides in a way that reflects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The municipality is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The Legislation

The Province of Manitoba passed the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA, the Act) into legislation in December, 2013. The goal of the act is to make significant progress towards achieving accessibility in the public and private sectors by 2023. The legislation requires accessibility standards to be developed over the next several years. The standards will address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living. These standards are:

1. Customer service
2. Information and communication
3. Transportation
4. Employment
5. Built environment

The AMA states its purpose being to prevent and remove barriers that disabled persons encounter. Disabled persons can encounter barriers in employment, accommodation, navigating the as built environment, delivering and receiving goods, services and information, or in general activities and undertakings. As such, the Act identifies the following principles that must guide the path to achieving accessibility:

➤ *Access*

Persons should have barrier-free access to places, events, and other functions that are generally available to all able bodied persons in the community;

- *Equality*
Persons should have barrier-free access to those things that will give them equality of opportunity and outcome;
- *Universal Design*
Access should be provided in a manner that does not establish or perpetuate differences based on a person's disability;
- *Systemic Responsibility*
The responsibility to prevent and remove barriers rests with the person or organization that is responsible for establishing or perpetuating the barrier.

The Customer Service Accessibility Standard was adopted in 2015 and the Rural Municipality of Rockwood is required to be compliant in November 2017. The standard requires organizations to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to customer service.

The Customer Service Accessibility Standard (CSSR) focuses on policy, training and good communication practices and aims to provide barrier-free customer service in public sector organizations. The CSSR defines “accessible customer service” as follows:

“Accessible customer service is provided when all persons who are reasonably expected to seek to obtain, use, or benefit from a good or service have the same opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from the good or service.”

The standard requires organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to customer service. Where this is not possible they must provide equivalent customer service. *To provide accessible customer service, organizations need to:*

- Review physical barriers that prevent customers from obtaining service;
- Consideration of communication requirements for all clients;

- Allowance of service animals;
- Allowance of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers and oxygen tanks;
- Inform all clients of the municipal accessibility policies and procedures;
- Inform clients when accessibility services are not available;
- Invite clients to provide feedback;
- Understanding of the Human Rights Code (Manitoba) and provide reasonable accommodations;
- Ensure there are no fees charged to provide accessible service;
- Seek to prevent the creation of new barriers;
- Recognizing that a support person may accompany a disabled person, and reasonably planning for and accommodating such persons;
- Training of staff on accessible customer service.

The organization is further expected to provide training regarding accessible customer service to its staff who provide or deliver the organization's goods and services directly to the public, or to any organization in Manitoba who provides the organization's goods and services on behalf of the organization. The organization must also provide training about accessible customer service to any individual participating in or responsible for developing or implementing the organization's policies and practices.

An organization must make reasonable measures to ensure all public events are held in an accessible meeting space, and that notice is given in an accessible manner where the public event is the requirement of an enactment.

Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee is comprised of staff representing various departments. The primary role is to provide recommendations on innovative approaches and solutions to make the services, programs, by-laws and policies more accessible to the residents and visitors to the RM of Rockwood.

Services Review and Consultation

The consultation process involves the feedback of various groups within the community such as the Stony Mountain Community Center, 55 Plus, Age Friendly and the Seniors Resource Centre. As well the RM of Rockwood will continue to invite feedback from individuals with disabilities and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.

The consultation process will be integral to assessing the accessibility of the delivery of services provided and further to assessing the effectiveness of any measures, policies and practices that are identified for needs for improvements to remove barriers.

The review process will involve the following matrix which will be used to help identify areas which require improvements and solutions to those deficiencies. This will include the types of barriers identified in the AMA:

Program/Service	Description & Delivery/Access	Identified Barriers	Proposed Solutions	Implementation Strategy	Implementation Date

The RM of Rockwood will continue to monitor the current by-laws, policies and identify any new by-laws, policies and procedures that will be required for the organization to implement the Plan.

Action Plan

Planned Accessibility Action Items:

General Requirements of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act				
Action	Working Timeline		Responsibility	
	2017	2018		
Create update Accessibility Plan	X	X	Accessibility Committee	
Consultation with various groups as listed	X	X	Accessibility Committee	
Place plan on website		X	Accessibility Committee	
Review of current policies, bylaws and operational practices	X	X	Accessibility Committee	

Identify alternate methods of provision of customer service where required	X	X	Accessibility Committee
Development of a staff & volunteer training to ensure accessible customer service	X	X	Accessibility Committee
Develop alternate methods of providing customer service where physical barriers exist	X	X	Accessibility Committee
Update of current website to ensure the information is accessible	X	X	Accessibility Committee
Concentration of the Civic offices to ensure barrier free customer service which includes the install of auto doors, signage upgrades as well as the development of a service animal policy	X	X	Accessibility Committee, CAO

Compliance & Implementation

As a result of the accessibility plan, all policies, procedures and by-laws will be continually monitored to ensure compliance and ensure strategies are in place to maintain a barrier free community. Further community consultation will have to take place as future requirements become identified.

A large component of the plan will involve staff training which will help to identify and eliminate behaviours towards individuals with disabilities, help educate on the various forms of disabilities and dispel perceptions of disabilities. This will help in the future development of policies and operating practices. This will help bring customer service equality to all clients.

The RM of Rockwood will have to develop a monitoring plan to ensure to compliance of the AMA today and for the future.

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