Accessible Customer Service Procedure

Subject: Ensuring Public Events are Accessible

This Procedure supports:

      Policy: Accessibility Policy #3012

      Objective: Employee Training

Issued by: Brian Kayes, Accessibility Coordinator

Developed by: Accessibility Working Group

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The following procedure outlines the steps City of Brandon employees follow to ensure public events we host are accessible to everyone.

When planning an event, designate an event coordinator with an awareness of accessibility issues; if required, seek assistance from the City of Brandon Accessibility Working Group.

The **Event Coordinator** may also assume the roles of the event chairperson and/or the master of ceremonies. This designated employee will:

1. **Location**

    Determine an appropriate location for the event. Visit the facility prior to the event and access accessibility and services. Things to consider include:

    - Is there barrier free access, including:
        - A ramp in place as required by the circumstances of the building design
        - Automatic door openers that are functioning
        - A barrier free path from the entrance to the meeting room
    - Is there barrier-free parking?
        - Designated accessible parking with barrier free access
        - A clear pathway from parking to building entrance
    - Do elevators have accessible control panel buttons and audio floor indicators?
    - If the location has barriers in the above areas, can a designated attendant be assigned to the area to assist?

- Are public telephones at an accessible height?
- Are barrier free washrooms available and close to meeting rooms?
- Is there a drop off site designated?
- Is there proximity to public transportation? What are the walking/rolling conditions of the pathway from the drop-off location to the event site?
- Ensure the meeting room has:
    - Optimal seating available if requested for persons with seeing or hearing related needs
    - Proximity to sign language interpreters, captioning and visual presentations
    - Moveable seating for persons using wheelchairs, service animals or service providers

2. **Advertising**
- Use a variety of media formats (print, email, website, radio, etc.)
- Communicate directly with disability organizations (see list in Employee Guide Appendix)
- Ensure posters, invitations and meeting materials are provided in accessible formats (see Accessible Documents Procedure)
- Every event notification, invitation and announcement will include:
    - An Active Offer with a deadline for requests:
      "Disability accommodations are available by advance request" and the appropriate contact information (Accessible City Services or Event Coordinator); include a deadline for requests if one is known.
    - An Active Offer for dietary requirements if a meal is served, such as "Dietary accommodations are available by advance request".
    - Promotions as "scent-free" with a request that presenters and participants refrain from using strongly scented toiletries, such as "Scent-free Event: To ensure the comfort of all, please refrain from wearing scented products to this event".
    - Notice of any confirmed access features available at the event (for example, ASL available)
    - Universal disability access symbols (see Bullet 6 of this procedure)

3. **Refreshments**
   - Are the eating facilities accessible?
   - Are menus available in Braille or large print?
   - Check registrations for any dietary restrictions provided

4. **Advance Planning**
   - Create a timeline for scheduling service providers (for example ASL interpreter) if a request for accommodation is received.
   - Request advance copies of presentation material from speakers for use by sign and simultaneous language interpreters, plain language interpreters, note-takers, or captionists
   - Provide all presenters and chair with Presenter Guidelines (attached)
   - Set the agenda with regular 20 to 30 minute health breaks and at least 60 minutes for a meal break.
   - Ensure registration process includes a space for Active Wording requests, including dietary requirements if meals are part of the event
   - Have arrangements in place to address weather related issues such as snow and ice removal
   - Plan emergency procedures including:
     - Know the emergency exit routes
     - Determine and be prepared to use a variety of ways of communicating in an emergency
     - Review the emergency plan with event planners and the facility manager
   - Prepare signage and participant identification:
     - In large print with contrasting colours
     - Sufficient for people to find their way around the event (parking, entrance, facilities, emergency exits)
   - Secure trip hazards such as electrical cords on floor
   - Adequate lighting for participants and speakers at podium
   - If not available in the facility, arrange for a public address system with a portable microphone if interaction is anticipated; designate a person to manage the microphone interaction.

5. **Presenters Guidelines:**

Chairperson will
- Inform participants of nearest accessible washroom, elevators, and emergency exits
- Remind participants that the event is scent free
- Ask all participants to introduce themselves at the outset of the meeting and to identify themselves before speaking throughout the meeting for the benefit of participants with visual-related needs
- Remind participants to use the microphone during presentations and when asking questions from the floor
- Briefly describe the content of the agenda and handout materials

All presenters should
- Use plain language, speaking clearly and facing the audience during presentation
- During the course of events clearly indicate changes in topics and announce times for breaks and adjournment
- When showing Power Point, use:
    - Slides that are clear and concise
    - San serif font
    - Large font size
    - Contrasting colour
    - Verbal descriptions of photographs, pictorials, graphics, charts or graphs
- When showing video use:
    - Captioned material
    - Descriptive narrative format