

SER-005-004

Strathcona County Municipal Policy Handbook

Social Inclusion

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Resolution No: 693/2011

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: n/a

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Next Review Date: 10/2014

Administrative Responsibility: Family & Community Services

Policy Statement

Strathcona County is committed to ensuring all residents benefit equitably from municipal resources, services and spaces and have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of community life. All residents will have the opportunity for engagement in programs and decisions which affect their lives. Social inclusion ensures equality and will be promoted in municipal program services, public spaces and facilities by addressing issues of affordability, accessibility and availability. The participation by persons from diverse populations is fostered.

Definitions

Accessibility

Ensures all residents have access to the same resources in the community. Accessibility seeks to minimize physical, systemic, attitudinal, information and communication, technological and transportation barriers.

Affordability

Ensures that supports are in place for a range of programs and services, including recreation and culture, transit, affordable housing alternatives and family support services for lower income residents that reflect their ability to pay. The Low Income Cut-Off will be used as a guideline for determining eligibility.

Availability

Refers to all factors that contribute ease of use including hours of services, scheduling, volume of service, parking availability, transit access as well as needs of specific target populations.

Engagement Processes

Ensure that all residents have the opportunity to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, and every effort is made to engage marginalized residents in a meaningful way that impacts barrier reduction.

Equality

Is the recognition of the equal value of all and treatment of each individual respectfully without unfair discrimination on the basis of socio-economic status, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, politics, marital status or sexual orientation?

Low Income Cut-off

LICO is an income threshold established by Stats Canada below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family.

Social Inclusion

The process which ensures that those at risk in society gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. Social exclusion occurs when certain groups of people are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from playing a full and active part in normal activities because of poverty, low education levels or inadequate life skills. It is difficult for them to access jobs, income and education opportunities or to have a normal role in society and community networks. They have little access to power or influencing decisions or policies that affect them and little chance of bettering their standard of living.

Guidelines

1. Equality
 - 1.1 All residents are treated with dignity and respect.
 - 1.2 All residents have equitable access to County services, programs, facilities and public spaces.
2. Affordability
 - 2.1 Subsidy guidelines are established for municipal programs and services to ensure cost is not a barrier to participation.
 - 2.2 Fee Subsidy Guidelines ensure a consistent and standardized process for all Municipal fee subsidies.
3. Accessibility
 - 3.1 An Accessibility Advisory Committee is appointed to identify and minimize barriers in Strathcona County municipal facilities, public spaces, and programs or services that prevent people from participating in community life and to promote equitable participation by persons with disabilities in the community. (Bylaw 47-2010)
4. Availability
 - 4.1 The needs of our diverse community and specific target populations will be taken into account in the planning and delivery of programs and services.
5. Public Engagement
 - 5.1 Marginalized groups are consulted in meaningful ways and facilitated in identifying barriers and suggesting effective methods for minimizing/removing them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mayor and Council

- Ensures the social inclusion principles of equality, accessibility and affordability have been given consideration in the development of plans and policies.
- As the public representatives of the County, the Mayor and members of Council are in a unique position of engaging residents in meaningful ways.

Executive Team, Directors and Departments

- Consider the principles of social inclusion in the development of new and review of existing programs.
- Ensure accessibility of programs, service and public spaces including public communications strategies which consider language options and different modes of presentations such as verbal, pictorial and tactile.
- As need is identified, provide targeted support as appropriate for marginalized groups.
- Consult with underserved populations as outlined in the Public Engagement Framework to identify and remediate specific barriers they face in accessing services/spaces.

All Staff

- Treat all members of the public with dignity and respect.

Family and Community Services

- Collect and update socio-demographic data and other information relevant to identifying and analyzing information about marginalized populations.
- Develop tools to address social inclusion.