

Corporate Customer Complaint and Service Request Handling Policy



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Administration & Finance	June 21, 2023	66-2023	1	6
Subsection	Repeals By-law Number		Policy Number	
Customer Service			AF-10-10	

Statement of Organizational Commitment:

The City of Kenora is committed to a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints and service requests received from members of the public regarding programs, facilities, City services, staff, or operational procedures in a timely manner.

Policy Statement

The Corporation of the City of Kenora will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures promote customer service and reflect the guiding principles of customer service excellence.

Purpose

This Policy is intended to enable the City of Kenora to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery complaints and service requests raised by members of the general public that were not satisfactorily handled via regular customer service channels or by frontline staff.

The Policy will assist the municipality in providing strong customer service to the public and contribute to continuous improvement of operations. The municipality strives to enhance customer satisfaction by:

- Providing timely and accurate response to complaints, and
- Using complaints as an opportunity to understand issues from the customers' perspective and improve program and service delivery levels.

Definitions

"Complaint" is any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities, or services provided by the City of Kenora or by a person or body acting on behalf of the City of Kenora. The term "dissatisfaction" is key to the definition of a complaint. Feedback of a positive or general nature, comments on a service or facility that do not require a response, or requests for service, are not complaints. Complaints imply that the complainant is unhappy or dissatisfied with the service received and that they require a follow-up response regarding the issue.

"Complainant" is the person who is dissatisfied and filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by City services may make a complaint including residents, people who work in or visit the city, local businesses or community groups.

"Compliment" is an expression of appreciation for programming or servicing.

"Feedback" is input from client that is neither positive, nor negative, but provides input or ideas.

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"Frivolous and Vexatious" is a complaint that has no serious purpose or value. Often a frivolous claim is one about a matter that is so trivial, meritless on its face, or without substance that investigation would be disproportionate in terms of time and cost. The implication is that the claim has not been brought in good faith because it clearly has no reasonable prospect of success and/or is not significant enough to warrant its mention.

"Service Request" is a request for a specific service provided by the City of Kenora. See the list online at www.kenora.ca.

1. Application of Policy:

This policy applies to City of Kenora employees with the following exceptions:

- a) Outside boards and agencies, including the Kenora District Home for the Aged, Kenora and Keewatin Public Library, Kenora Handi-Transit and Kenora Conventional Transit, which will apply their own complaints handling processes.
- b) The City's Elected Officials.

A complaint is distinct from:

- a request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service, or to notify the municipality that a scheduled service was not provided on time.
- a general enquiry or specific request for information regarding municipal service
- an opinion or feedback, comment and expression of interest in a program or service
- an expression of approval or compliment for municipal staff member, program, product or process.
- a suggestion or idea submitted by a customer with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes.

The Policy does not apply to complaints regarding:

- Staff members that are employed by a service provider contracted by the municipality, (those employees shall be subject to the policies of that service provider);
- Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing municipal by-law, policy or procedure;
- A decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council; or,
- Internal employee complaints; or,
- Matters that are handled by a tribunal, court of law, quasi-judicial board, or other administrative or judicial body with authority to hear the complaint.

Complaints received that are frivolous or vexatious in nature upon review by the Director of the appropriate department will not warrant a response. If the Director is uncertain, judgment will be sought from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

This policy applies to complaints that are received online at www.kenora.ca, by phone, at any service counter, by email, by mail or by fax.

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2. Policy Requirements

The City of Kenora will deal with all complaints promptly, courteously, impartially, and professionally. All complainants will be treated with respect.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other applicable legislation. The identity of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to know to consider and respond to the complaint. All participants in the complaints process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required by law. If the matter goes to the Ombudsman, it may be necessary to release a complainant's name and contact information during the resolution process.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the City of Kenora or by a person or body acting on behalf of the City of Kenora, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

All formal complaints filed necessitate a response unless frivolous or vexatious in nature.

Who can make a complaint?

Subject to the restrictions set out in Part I of this Policy, anyone who uses or is affected by City services can make a complaint. This includes but is not limited to:

- Residents
- People who work in or visit the city
- Local businesses
- Community groups

3. Complaint Process

Frontline Resolution

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with City employee(s) directly involved with the issue where appropriate. If not resolved with initial staff it should be escalated to their supervisor, manager, or director.

It is the responsibility of all City employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

Process for filing a Complaint

Where a frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the Manager of Customer Services, on the form attached as Schedule "A". The form must be completed in full.

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Complaints can be submitted using Schedule A – City of Kenora Corporate Complaint Form:

- Online via the City’s website www.kenora.ca
- By telephone;
- By email;
- By mail;
- By fax
- In person at any City facility

Service Standards

The following Service Standards will be adhered to in the handling of all complaints received.

Receipt and Acknowledgement

The Manager of Customer Services, or their designee, shall forward a copy to the Director of the Department the complaint is regarding, or designate. Within three (3) business days of receipt of the complaint, the Manager of Customer Services shall acknowledge the complainant, if contact information is provided, in writing that the complaint has been received using the form letter attached as Schedule “B” Acknowledgement of Complaint Form. This letter of acknowledgement must identify who will be following up on the complaint, as well as his/her contact information. Email communication can be utilized where an email address has been provided, using Schedule B template as the content of the email.

Investigation

Council does not have jurisdiction over staff. That is the overall responsibility of the CAO. Council has one employee and that is the CAO.

A Director, or their designee, may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.

If a complaint is made against a Director, or General Manager, the Chief Administrative Officer or their designee shall conduct the investigation.

If a complaint is made against the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor shall consult with Council and may designate a Solicitor or other qualified individual at arms-length from the municipality to investigate.

Decision

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a complaint, the Director, or their designee, shall provide a response in writing, if contact information is provided, to the complainant. This does not pertain to personnel matters or internal claims processes.

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The response shall include:

- Appropriate information pertaining to the matter;
- Any actions the municipality has taken or will take as a result of the complaint.

Note: this may not be detailed should the complaint be about staff.

If the designated staff member is unable to provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days, they shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.

Record

The Director or designate shall retain a file on all communication with the complainant including the resolution in accordance with the municipality's records retention by-law. If a municipal employee was the subject of the complaint, a copy of the record may be retained in their personnel file, notwithstanding any procedures outlined in existing collective agreements.

Reporting

Directors are responsible for advising the Manager of Customer Services when the complaint has been resolved.

Compliance

Managers, General Managers and Directors are responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with the Corporate Complaints Handling Policy.

Responsibilities

Employees: All employees are expected to have knowledge and awareness of the City's requirement to receive complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.

Managers: Managers are responsible for facilitating a prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved.

General Managers (GMs) and Directors: General Managers and Directors are responsible for the receipt and resolution of all complaints according to the service standards set out herein. GMs and Directors hold responsibility for departmental compliance to the Complaints Policy.

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Monitoring/Contraventions

The Manager of Customer Services or designate will monitor corporate compliance with this Policy and will follow up with appropriate General Managers and Directors for further action as required.

Appeal Process

Once the municipality has communicated the decision to the complainant, there is no appeal process at the municipal level.

SCHEDULE A – Corporate Customer Complaint Form



*Indicates a required field

Purpose

To submit a complaint regarding a City of Kenora program, service, facility or staff member, where you believe the City has not provided a service experience to your satisfaction at the point of service delivery

All complaints will be dealt within in a confidential manner according to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Please tell us which location you dealt with:

Please tell us the date and approximate time of your visit or interaction with the City of Kenora

Names of staff person involved, if know:

In 350 words or less, please provide us with the details of your complaint:

In 350 words or less, please describe how you would like to see your complaint resolved:

Have you contacted anyone else from the City of Kenora regarding this complaint?

Contacts Details of Complainant:

*Name

*Address

*City

Country

Province/State

*Daytime Phone

Postal/Zip Code

*Email Address

Collection of data disclaimer:

Personal information contained on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, S. O. 2001, c. 25 and will be used for the purpose of administering your request for, and use of, Corporate Complaint Form. Questions about this collection should be directed to the City Clerk, City of Kenora, 1 Main Street South, Kenora Ontario, P9N 3X2. Phone: 807 467-2295.

SCHEDULE B – Acknowledgement of Complaint Form Letter



City of Kenora
Kelly Galbraith
Manager of Customer Services
One Main Street South
Kenora, ON P9N 3X2
Ph: 807-467-2289
E-mail: kgalbraith@kenora.ca
www.kenora.ca

Insert Date

Name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns regarding XXXXXX. Your written complaint was received by the municipality on insert date complaint was received.

Insert Name of person assigned complaint, has been assigned the investigation into your complaint and can be reached at insert phone number or by email at insert email address. We will provide a response to you within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving your complaint.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact me directly by phone at 807-467-2289 or by email at kgalbraith@kenora.ca

Yours truly,

Kelly Galbraith
Customer Services Manager