



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
From: Mark Buffone, Accessibility Compliance Specialist
Meeting Date: February 5, 2025
Report: Access Fund Request from Social Services, Report AAC25-001

Subject

A report to seek approval for an Access Fund Request from Social Services to enhance accessible customer service at the Social Services office.

Recommendations

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) approve the recommendations outlined in Report AAC25-001, dated February 5, 2025 of the Accessibility Compliance Specialist as follows:

- a) That a presentation from the Social Services Quality Assurance Manager, about the Access Fund Request, be received for information;
- b) That Access Fund Request 2025-001 in the amount of \$10,169.61 be approved.

Executive Summary

- The AAC is asked to review and approve an Access Fund Request from Social Services in the amount of \$10,169.61 for three window intercom systems with integrated counter style hearing loops.
- The hearing assist systems will be installed in the main reception area of the Social Services office, as a follow-up to the successful pilot system installed in spring 2024.

Background

The AAC advised on priorities to implement hearing loop systems for City facilities in February and March of 2023, mainly focusing on service counters. As a result, pilot hearing loop systems were installed at the main reception areas serving City Hall, the Transit Terminal and Social Services. The City is working towards implementing more hearing loop systems at key service counters and also at various multi-purpose and event spaces across various City facilities. For example, an assistive listening system was recently integrated into the sound system serving the main event space in the Peterborough Memorial Centre.

Description of Request

Supply and install three window intercom systems with integrated counter style hearing loops at the Social Services reception area.

Amount of Funds Requested

The amount requested is \$10,169.61 including tax. Breakdown:

- \$7,197.00 - window intercom amplifier, microphone and speaker bridge bar unit
- \$837.00 - above counter hearing loop (tax exempt)
- \$1,200.00 – labour for installation (tax exempt)

Expected Date of Project Completion

The project will be completed by March 2025.

Facility Background and Reason for Access Fund Request

The main ground floor reception area at Social Services was identified by the AAC as a high priority area to implement hearing loop systems. The four service counters in the reception area serve as the first point of contact for visitors to the Social Services office. Social Services received a monthly average of 1527 visitors in 2024.

Due to an increase in violent and aggressive incidents in the reception area, Social Services installed Plexi-glass barriers at the service counters, with standard cut-out pass through areas and speaking ports. As a result, staff and visitors have instantly reported barriers related to hearing and their ability to effectively communicate through the new glazing system.

The Social Services main reception area was included in a March 2024 pilot project to determine if a window intercom system with an integrated counter style hearing loop would help support people with hearing related disabilities. The system piloted at one of the four service counters has positively removed barriers for both visitors and staff and effectively removed hearing related barriers. The system also increased confidentiality for visitors when sharing questions and requests with staff.

Social Services thanks the AAC for their financial support to implement a successful pilot system in spring 2024. Through this request, Social Services will be able to embrace inclusive design principles by including window intercom systems with integrated counter style hearing loops at the remaining three service counters. This project will improve customer service and accessibility with an impact to both the general public and City staff.

Reference Images



Figure 1: Reception counter area (left side)



Figure 2: Reception counter area (right side)

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Governance & Fiscal Sustainability

Strategic Initiative: "Invest in infrastructure to ensure it meets the future needs of our growing City"

Window intercom systems with integrated counter style hearing loops at the Social Services reception area are needed to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Engagement and Consultation

The AODA section 29.(4) requires the AAC to advise Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards.

Budget and Financial Implications

The Social Services Access Fund request is for \$10,169.61. The current Access Fund balance available is \$65,903.05. Approval of the Social Services Access Fund request would result in a projected Access Fund balance of \$55,733.44.

Attachments

Appendix A: Quote from Hearing Assistive Technology Group, dated 2025-01-08

Submitted by,

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Accessibility Compliance Specialist

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