

Accessibility Standards for 'Customer Service'			
Source: Standing Committee on Governance	Authority: Standing Committee on Governance	Original Approval Date: Mar. 2012 Last Review Date: -	Next Review Date: Feb. 2014
<p>Purpose of Policy:</p> <p>This policy contains statements that meet the legislated 'Customer Service' requirements of the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> and to provide for other standards which are good practices. This policy will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.</p>			
<p>Theological Rationale:</p> <p>Jesus said, "Come unto me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens ..." (Matt. 11:28)</p> <p>As a community of faith, the congregation of Eastminster United Church recognizes and accepts its responsibility to provide ministry in a way that allows everyone, regardless of disability or other barrier, to accept that invitation of Jesus through participation in the programs, services and other activities which comprise its life and work.</p>			

1.0 Mission Statement of Eastminster United Church

"As members of Eastminster United Church, actively engaged in the ministry of Jesus Christ, we are called to be a caring family, united in joyful fellowship and responsive to the needs of our neighbours.

"With God's help and guidance we are therefore committed to the worship of God, to provide for Christian nurture and pastoral care, to give faithful witness and leadership within our community, and to help those in need, in our land and throughout the world."

2.0 Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Eastminster United Church is committed to include people with disabilities as full and active participants. We will remove barriers and challenge attitudes that exclude people with disabilities from full and active participation. All people are encouraged to practice their faith and use their gifts in worship, service and leadership.

3.0 Providing Programs, Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Eastminster United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

worship, social events, outreach programs, educational programs, leadership, child and youth programs.

3.1 Communication

- i) We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- ii) We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.

- iii) We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone Services

- i) We are committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants.
- ii) We will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- iii) We will offer to communicate with participants by for example e-mail, website, surveys and DVD ministry, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

3.3 Assistive Devices

- i) We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.
- ii) We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access the Sanctuary for worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.
- iii) We will familiarize ushers and other staff/volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.
- iv) Eastminster United Church will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other applicable programs, goods and services:

ushers and other staff/volunteers will be trained on how to use the assistive devices available on our premises, including: elevators, hearing assist system, portable defibrillator, washroom emergency call system, automatic door openers, wheelchairs, removable seating.
- v) Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses, upon approval from the Church Council.

3.4 Accessibility Committee/Officer

- i) The congregation is committed to designating, under the guidance of the Governance Committee, an Accessibility Officer to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Church Council.
- ii) In order to meet this mandate, the Accessibility Officer will consult and report to the Governance Committee. A part of the Accessibility Officer's role will be to obtain feedback from champions of accessibility for people with disabilities, congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of the Church Council, and members of the staff (including maintenance staff).
- iii) The Accessibility Officer will have several roles:
 - a) The officer will establish policies on providing accessible programs, goods and services to participants with disabilities that are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulations 429/07.
 - b) The officer will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - c) The officer will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
 - d) The officer will ensure that assistive devices provided by our church are in good working order and that requests for devices are met, as per approval from the Church Council.
 - e) The officer will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

4.0 Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- 4.1 We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal on parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- 4.2 We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with participants are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.
- 4.3 We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Eastminster United Church premises with his or her support person.
- 4.4 Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to any event for which there is a charge for admission.
- 4.5 Participants will be informed that fees for support persons will not be charged by a notice that will be posted in Eastminster United Church premises. Service animals will always be welcome.

5.0 Notice of Temporary Disruption

Eastminster United Church will provide participants with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be delivered to participants by means of the church website, e-mail directory, and posted signs at all church entrances.

6.0 Training for Staff and Volunteers

Eastminster United Church's Accessibility Officer will be responsible for coordinating training for all employees, volunteers and others who deal with participants or other third parties on our behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained:

- Governance -Members of the Church Council
- Staff - All paid staff including Order of Ministry personnel
- Volunteer Staff - Hospitality Coordinators, Office staff including Sunday attendants, Lead Ushers, Lead person(s) re Sunday morning programs for children and youth.

7.0 Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Eastminster United Church is to meet and surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities.

Comments on our programs, goods and services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

- 7.1 Feedback regarding the way Eastminster United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by:
 - e-mail to echurch@eastminster.on.ca.
 - feedback forms which can be deposited in suggestion box or left with office staff. (Appendix A)
- 7.2 All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Officer.
- 7.3 Participants can expect to hear back within seven (7) work days.
- 7.4 Confidentiality will continue to be respected during the entire communication process.

- 7.5 Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Officer.
- 7.6 Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Officer and made available to the congregation.

8.0 Modifications to this or Other Policies

We are committed to developing accessibility policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

- 8.1 No changes, therefore, will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities or their families.
- 8.2 Any policy of Eastminster United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

9.0 Questions about This Policy

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence to participants with disabilities. Any questions about the policy, or its purpose, should be directed to the Accessibility Officer.