



# WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

## DEVELOPING YOUR OWN POLICY STATEMENT: ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

A document created for  
United Church congregations  
within Hamilton Conference,  
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**WELCOMING COMMUNITIES**  
**Introduction to this Document**

**Writing your own Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy Statement**

**THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD ON THE HAMILTON CONFERENCE WEBSITE.**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

*This document is not legal advice and should be read together with the official language of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (“the standard”) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If there is any conflict between this document, “the standard”, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, “the standard” and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, are the final authorities.*

**CONTENT INDEX:**

- Introduction Pages 2-3
  
- Section 1: The Big Picture Pages 4-5
  - An overview of the 5 components that are part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
  
- Section 2: A Guide to Accessibility Standards Pages 6-7
  - An overview of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service with a list of the requirements (the component we are addressing in this document)
  
- Section 3: The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Pages 8-17
  - Details of customer standard requirements
  
  - NOTE: For further detailed information:  
(To view the official wording of the regulation, go to [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca) and click on “Current Consolidated Law” to do a keyword search for “429/07”)
  
  - (To obtain a Guide to Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07; Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) go to [www.accesson.ca](http://www.accesson.ca) or call 1-866-515-2025, The Contact Centre (ServiceOntario) for a print copy. This website has many other resources for understanding the standards and for training resources.
  
- Section 4: Policy Statement Template Pages 18-25
  - A policy statement template that is a generic statement written to address the requirements of The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07, including samples for feedback notices and forms.
  - Develop your own statement from this policy statement template.

The document was developed using material from:

- ✧ Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services  
[www.accesson.ca](http://www.accesson.ca)
- ✧ Reena (2009) Breaking Down Barriers: A Multi-Faith Guide to Accessibility in Places of Worship. [www.reena.org](http://www.reena.org)

The need for a policy statement for Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is the first standard to come into effect from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The deadline for implementing these standards for churches is January 1, 2012. This document will assist you in creating a policy statement for your congregation.

We are entitling the policy statement “Welcoming Congregations”, recognizing this task as one more way we can grow in our practices of being a welcoming church with a particular focus this time on the needs of persons with disabilities. Section 4 is a generic policy statement from which you can develop your own statement for your congregation.

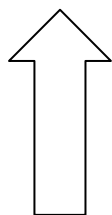
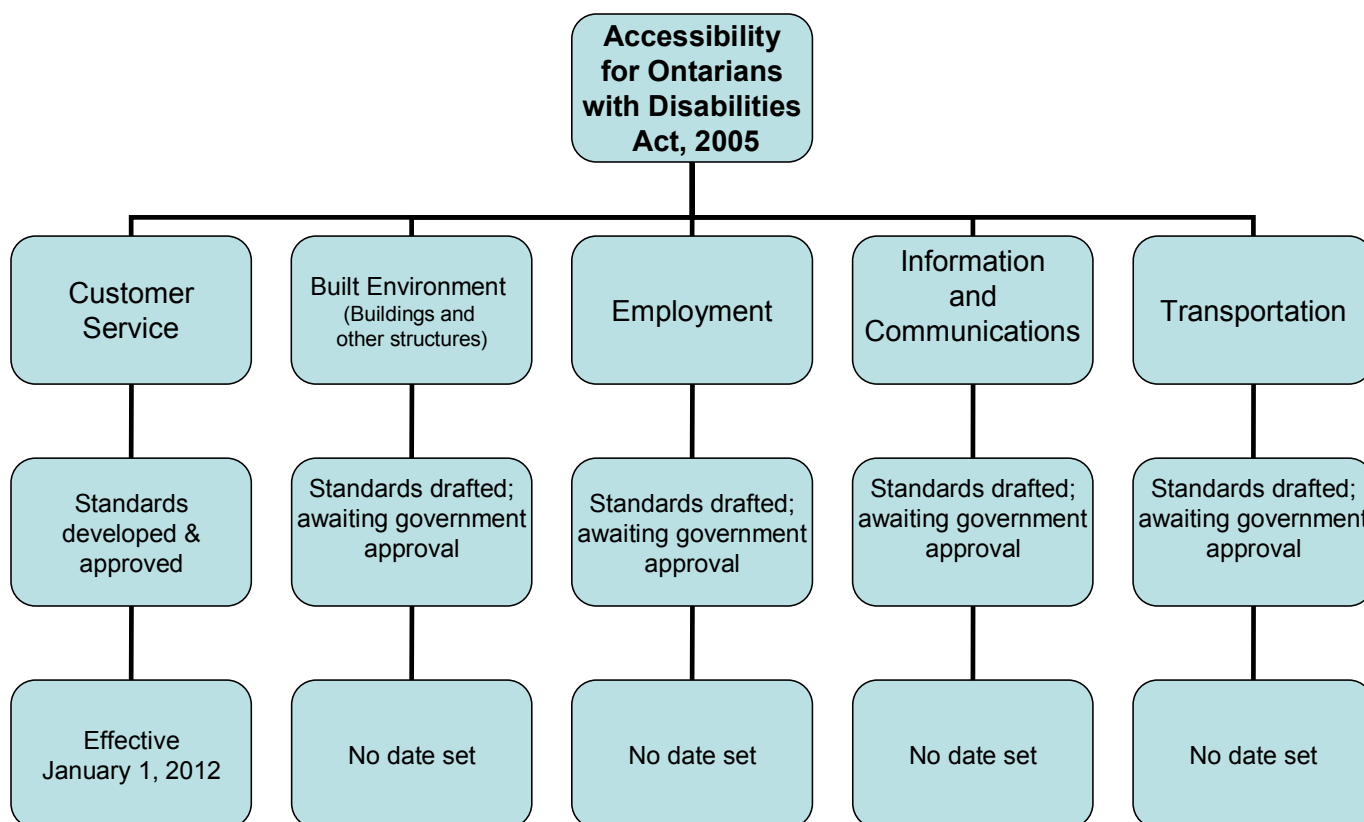
NOTE: THIS POLICY ADDRESSES CUSTOMER STANDARDS ONLY – THE ONLY STANDARD NEEDING IMPLEMENTATION AT THIS TIME (Deadline of January 1, 2012). Appendix A gives you an overview of the 5 areas of standards – the customer standards and the 4 other standards to be developed at a later date.

Let's get started!

- Read Section 3 to familiarize yourself with the Standards.
- Identify your existing policies, practices and procedures.
- Identify the gaps that exist.
- Develop your new policies, practices and procedures that reflect the requirements.
- Create your own policy statement
  - Use the template in Section 4 as a guideline, replacing the generic word or statement with your own information. These generic words are *in italics* throughout the template.
  - Where there are gaps in your policies, practices and procedures, note that your statement needs to reflect how your Accessibility Officer/Committee is addressing these gaps.

**Section 1**  
**Accessibility for Ontarians Act, 2005**  
**The Big Picture**

## Components of the Accessibility Act



**ONLY  
COMPONENT  
NEEDING  
ADDRESSING  
RIGHT  
NOW**

## Accessibility for Ontarians Act, 2005

### The Big Picture (continued)

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 came into being replacing the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 calls on the business community, public sector, not-for-profit sector, and people with disabilities or their representatives to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards.

Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The first standard to come into effect is the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. By January 1, 2012, all sectors will be required to have implemented the Customer Service standards.

Other standards are also being developed in the areas of:

- built environment (buildings and other structures)
- employment
- information and communications
- transportation

These other standards were available for public review in 2009 and are now undergoing revisions before being sent for approval and being passed into law. The goal is for Ontario to be totally accessible by the year 2025.

#### **Customer Service**

Date for churches: January 1, 2012

Already in place, the standard states what businesses and other organizations in Ontario must do to provide their goods and services in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The legal requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service are set out in two Ontario Regulations

- Ontario Regulation 429/07 which states the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
- Ontario Regulation 430/07 which exempts organizations that have fewer than 20 employees (other than designated public sector organizations) from certain documentation requirements of the standard.

#### **Built Environment**

No date set

The goal of the proposed standard is to break down barriers in buildings and other structures for people with disabilities by proposing requirements in areas such as:

- entrances, doorways and ramps
- parking spaces
- signs and displays
- recreation, such as parks and trails.

#### **Employment**

No date set

The goal of the proposed standard is to help employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The proposed standard:

- sets out specific requirements for the recruitment, retention and accommodation of people with disabilities, and
- applies to all organizations in Ontario with at least one employee.

#### **Information and Communications**

No date set

The proposed standard outlines how businesses and organizations may be required to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

#### **Transportation**

No date set

This standard is the only one that is sector specific, that is, it relates specifically to modes of transportation that come under the jurisdiction of provincial and municipal governments.

(Reference: Ministry of Community and Social Services)

(Provided by Bev Oag,, Duty of Care and Incorporated Ministries, Program Coordinator, General Council

# **SECTION 2** **WELCOMING COMMUNITIES:** **A GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS** **An Overview**

Re: Developing Congregational Guides to Accessibility

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT: MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES (MCSS)  
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2005 (AODA)

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE  
ONTARIO REGULATION 429/07

## **WHY?**

- The purpose of the accessibility standards is to move organizations (including churches) in Ontario forward on accessibility.

## **WHEN?**

- The deadline for churches for compliance with the Customer Service Standard is January 1, 2012.

## **WHAT?**

- The customer service standard is the first standard developed under this Act
- Each church will be required to address how it will meet each of 11 requirements.
  - These 11 requirements are summarized on the reverse side of this flyer

*Let's see this task as another opportunity for us to continue to make our churches welcoming!*

## **WHAT DOES "CUSTOMER SERVICE" REFER TO IN A CHURCH CONTEXT?**

(This information was in a General Council e-mail document in December 2009)

- This term is understood as our interaction with those who come through our doors – parishioners, community ministry participants, campers, students, seniors, and so on.
- It may also include how we interact with those who are seeking religious services – weddings, funerals, baptisms.

## **HOW?**

- How will Conference support individual congregations?
  - This document includes a guide (Section 3) and a template (Section 4) for writing your own standards document
  - Further support is available from your Conference staff.



- Set aside 45 minutes and watch the training video provided by the Ontario government.  
It is available at: [www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/serve-ability/splash.html](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/serve-ability/splash.html)

## **WELCOMING COMMUNITIES: A GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS**

### **An Overview** (continued)

#### **THE REQUIREMENTS** (abbreviated)

(A full copy of the Guide to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) can be downloaded from the Hamilton Conference website [www.hamconf.org](http://www.hamconf.org))

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities. What are policies, practices and procedures?
  - a. Policies – what you intend to do, including any rules for staff.
  - b. Practices – what you actually do on a day-to-day basis, including how you offer and deliver the services.
  - c. Procedures – how you will go about doing the policies; the steps staff and volunteers are expected to take.
2. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that these policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the 4 core principles:
  - a. Independence
  - b. Dignity
  - c. Integration
  - d. Equality of opportunity
3. Set a policy both on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices and on any measures your church offers to enable people to access your goods and services.
4. Train staff, volunteers, and any other people who interact on your behalf with persons with disabilities. Train staff, volunteers, and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the topics included in the customer service standard.
5. Establish a process for feedback and your response to the feedback.
6. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his/her disability.
7. Allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by other law. If excluded by other law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
8. Permit persons with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them.
9. When admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission fee, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
10. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are temporarily disrupted.

**SECTION 3**  
**The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**  
**Ontario Regulation 429/07, Customer Service Standards**

This section outlines the standards that need to be addressed in the policy statement that is developed (Section Four provides a policy statement template).

(To obtain the complete document Guide to Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07; Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), go to [www.accesson.ca](http://www.accesson.ca))

Each standard is boxed and shaded, with elaborating points included under each standard.

**POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing programs, goods and services to participants with disabilities

- Designate an Accessibility Officer or establish an Accessibility Committee (details on page 20, section 3.4 of the policy statement template)
- Assign the Accessibility Officer/Committee to draft accessibility policies (policy statement template, Section 4, pages 18-25).
  - List existing policies, practices and procedures;
  - Identify gaps;
  - Develop your new or revised policies, practices and procedures in keeping with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity;
  - Refer to [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual - for further guidelines.
- Present the draft policy statement to the Board/Council for approval.

## POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity

- Designate the Accessibility Officer/Committee:
  - To establish policies, practices and procedures that are consistent with the core principles;
  - To review policies, practices and procedures annually to ensure they are consistent with the core principles.
  
- Interpretation of the core principles:
  - **Dignity** – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people;
  - **Independence** – when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others;
  - **Integration** – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other participants (unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access programs, goods and services);
  - **Equal opportunity** – service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access programs, goods and services equal to that given to others.

## POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Set a policy on allowing participants to use their own assistive devices to access your programs, goods and services and about any other measures you offer to enable them to access your programs, goods and services.

Your policy should specify that in your place of worship:

- Participants are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access ritual practice and other programs, goods and services;
- You will make every effort to provide assistive devices deemed necessary for accessing your programs, goods and services by the Accessibility Officer/Committee;
- Upon a participant's request to the Accessibility Officer/Committee, you will make every effort to provide the requested assistive devices and/or services and cover relevant financial expenses (when funds are available);
- Usher, greeters and other front-line volunteers/staff will be trained on how to use the assistive devices available on your premises and be familiarized with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing your programs, goods and services;
- The Accessibility Officer/Committee will be responsible for ensuring that:
  - Assistive devices that you provide are in good working order;
  - Front-line volunteers/staff are trained on how to operate these devices;
  - Requests for assistive devices are met, as per approval from the Board/Council.

## COMMUNICATION

Communicate with a participant with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability

- Direct Communication:
  - Train all staff and volunteers who interact with participants on behalf of your place of worship on how to communicate with people with disabilities;
  - Use language that is clear, concise and meets the needs of the audience;
  - Use visuals in sermons and other educational discussions (e.g., diagrams, charts, transcripts, summaries, live captioning, etc.);
  - Communicate directly with a participant, not their support person;
  - Use a participant's assistive device to communicate with them only when given permission by them or their support person;
  - Equip ushers with notepads and pens, picture boards or other appropriate communication aids;
  - Provide visuals when announcing page numbers during text-based ritual practices;
  - Display a visual of the entire sequence of the text-based ritual practice at the front of the sanctuary and provide visual cues at each step of the progression.
- Indirect Communication:
  - Provide bulletins/newsletters/publications in alternative formats (e.g., large-print, electronic version encoded for compatibility with screen-reading software, etc.);
  - Ensure your website is encoded for compatibility with screen-reading software and has a large font option;
  - Use a web accessibility checker (such as [www.achecker.ca/checker/index.php](http://www.achecker.ca/checker/index.php))

## SERVICE ANIMALS

Let participants with disabilities bring their service animal onto any part of your premises open to the public or third parties, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

If service animals are excluded by another law, use other measures to provide services to applicable participants

- Develop policies on the inclusion of participants accompanied by animals into your programs and services.
- Carefully consider the requirements of the legislation in formulating these policies.
- Educate the congregation about the different types and functions of service animals.
- Provide opportunities for participants to introduce/talk about their service animal to the congregation.

If your place of worship has 20 or more employees, refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual)

## SUPPORT PERSONS

Let participants with disabilities bring their support person with them when accessing programs, goods or services on your premises.

- Develop policies on the inclusion of participants accompanied by support persons into your programs and services.
- Make efforts to ensure support persons are welcome.
- Encourage participation of support persons wherever possible.
- Educate the congregation about the different types and functions of support persons.
- Offer an informal lesson to orient support persons with practices and rituals in your place of worship.
- Work with support persons, in relevant situations, to customize behavioural plans for the successful integration of their support recipients into sanctuary ritual practices.
- Announce when programs, goods or services, due to health and safety concerns, might require some participants to be accompanied by a support person.

Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a participant.

- Develop a policy regarding admission fees for support persons.
- Specify the exact fee that participants must pay for accompanying support person when making announcements about fees for applicable programs, goods and services.

If your place of worship has 20 or more employees, refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual)

## TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS OF SERVICE

Provide notice when facilities or services that participants with disabilities usually use to access your programs, goods or services are temporarily unavailable.

- When notifying participants of temporary disruptions of facilities or services, specify the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services available.
- Ask participants affected by the temporary disruption for suggestions on potential alternative accommodations.
- Apologize for the unfortunate circumstances.
- Decide how and where to provide the notice of temporary disruption. If possible, announce disruptions in different ways (e.g., sign posted, website, announcement, outgoing voicemail, etc.)
- Create a database of congregants who require facilities or services for accessibility, so that in the event of a disruption they can be notified.
- The Accessibility Officer/Committee should consider:
  - Making personal phone calls to participants likely to be affected by the temporary disruption;
    - Sending e-mails to participants likely to be affected by the disruption;
    - Including a large-print notice in the e-version of your weekly bulletin;
    - Posting a large-print notification on the home page of your website.

If your place of worship has 20 or more employees, refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual)

TRAINING

Provide training on how to serve participants with disabilities for: staff, volunteers, contractors, those involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures, and anyone else who interacts with participants on your behalf.

- Designate the Accessibility Officer/Committee to:
  - Determine which staff and volunteers must be trained under the legislation – refer to section eight of the Compliance Manual ([www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on Compliance Toolkit and scroll down to Compliance Manual);
  - Coordinate training in a format that is appropriate to the staff and volunteers being trained and that meets legislated requirements outlined in the Compliance Manual;
  - Create a policy outlining your commitment to training all applicable staff and volunteers. (For places of worship with 20 or more employees, include a summary of the contents of the training and details of when the training will be provided).
  
- For Ushers, Greeters and Other Front-Line Volunteers/Staff
  - Designate an accessibility trainer or an Accessibility Committee member who knows the legislation to lead an interactive training session.
    - Consider collaborating with other places of worship;
    - Provide user-friendly reference documents for trainees.
  - Alternatively, require front-line volunteers to complete Serve-Ability, a training e-module available at [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html).
  
- For Administrative Staff and Lay Leaders
  - Designate an accessibility trainer or an Accessibility Committee member who knows the legislation to deliver an orientation session on accessibility to the administrative staff and lay leaders (and new members as required).
  - Alternatively, require administrative staff and lay leaders to complete the “policy makers” section of the Serve-Ability e-module available at: [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html)
  
- For Faith Leaders/Ministry Personnel
  - Include Faith Leaders/Ministry Personnel at the lay leaders’ accessibility orientation meeting.
  - Alternatively, require all Faith Leaders/Ministry Personnel to complete both the general and “policy makers” sections of the Serve-Ability e-module available at: [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html)

If your place of worship has 20 or more employees, refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual)

Establish a process for receiving feedback on how you provide service to participants with disabilities and how you will respond to feedback and take action on any complaints. Make information about your feedback process readily available to your congregation and the public.

- Determine how your place of worship will receive feedback on accessibility from participants (sample forms pages 23-25)  
Consider the following:
  - Have a large-print and noticeable link on the home page of your website directing congregants to a section where they can submit feedback;
  - Place a suggestion drop box labeled “accessibility feedback” that is visible, accessible, and regularly monitored in the main foyer or other easy-to-access location;
  - Send out an annual on-line survey about your place of worship’s accessibility via the congregation’s e-mail distribution list, or by mail;
  - Notify the congregation in weekly/monthly bulletins of a phone number or e-mail address where participants can provide feedback directly to the Accessibility Officer/Committee;
  - Include a section on membership forms for feedback on accessibility.
- The Accessibility Officer/Committee should:
  - Conduct an annual “needs and strengths” accessibility assessment based on information from various feedback channels;
  - Take reasonable steps to address solutions to complaints/negative feedback from congregants;
  - Create a policy outlining the procedures for responding to feedback from congregants;
  - Involve the person who has voiced a complaint or concern in considering a solution;
  - Prepare a document outlining the entire feedback process including information on:
    - Where, and in what ways, participants can provide feedback;
    - What information participants should include in their complaint;
    - Who is responsible for receiving feedback;
    - What actions will be taken when a complaint is received;
    - Whether or not participants who submit feedback can expect an answer;
    - The period of time expected for a response;
  - Post the document on your place of worship’s website, distribute hard copies and e-mail electronic copies.

If your place of worship has 20 or more employees, refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual – refer to Appendices C and D for feedback templates)

## DOCUMENTATION

- Documentation requirements deal with the requirement in the standard for places of worship with 20 or more employees to prepare documentation in relation to service animals, service disruptions, training and other issues.

Refer to Section 10 of The Compliance Manual for documentation requirements (available at [www.accesson.ca/compliance](http://www.accesson.ca/compliance) - click on compliance toolkit and scroll down to the manual)

**Section 4**  
**Generic Policy Statement Template**  
(including sample feedback documents)

# **WELCOMING COMMUNITIES**

(NAME) United Church  
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service  
Policy Statement  
(Date)

(Picture of your church)

This policy contains statements that meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard and other items that are good practices. This policy will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

## **GENERIC POLICY STATEMENT TEMPLATE**

### **1. Our Mission**

The Mission of (Name) United Church is:

*(Insert Mission of your congregation)*

### **2. Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, (Name) United Church strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our programs, goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other participants.

### **3. Providing Programs, Goods and Services to People with Disabilities**

(Name) 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:

*(List those areas where you are serving all participants – e.g., worship, social events, etc.)*

#### **3.1 Communication**

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

#### **3.2 Telephone Services**

- We are committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants.
- We will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- We will offer to communicate with participants by *(Insert other means of communication that apply, e.g., email, TTY, relay services)* if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

## **GENERIC POLICY STATEMENT TEMPLATE** *(continued)*

### **3.3 Assistive Devices**

- We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.
- 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.
- 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.
- *(Name)* 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:
    - *(Insert list of assistive devices available on the premises)*
- 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 Board/Council.

### **3.4 Accessibility Committee/Officer**

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Officer/establishing an Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Board/Council.
- If establishing an Accessibility Committee, committee membership will be comprised of champions of accessibility for people with disabilities, including congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of the Board/Council, and members of the staff (including maintenance staff).
- The Accessibility Officer/Committee will have several roles:
  - The officer/committee 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 Regulation 429/07.
  - The officer/committee will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
  - The officer/committee will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
  - The officer/committee will ensure that assistive devices provided by our church are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met, as per approval from the Board/Council.
  - The officer/committee will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

**GENERIC POLICY STATEMENT TEMPLATE (continued)**

**4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 (Name) United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charge for support persons accompanying a participant to *(Insert applicable service or program)*. Note: *If you will charge fees for the support person, your statement would be "Fees will be charged to the support person....."*
- Participants will be informed of these fees by a notice that will be posted in (Name) United Church premises and *(Insert any other means by which the place of worship will notify participants of fee)*

**5. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

(Name) 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 *(Insert notification procedure)*

**6. Training for Staff and Volunteers**

(Name) United Church's Accessibility Officer/Committee 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:

*(Insert list of positions that require training)*

## **GENERIC POLICY STATEMENT TEMPLATE** *(continued)*

### **7. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of *(Name)* 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.

- Feedback regarding the way *(Name)* United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by *(Insert the ways feedback can be provided: e.g., email, verbally, suggestion box, feedback card, etc.)*
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Officer/Committee.
- Participants can expect to hear back in *(Indicate number of days)*.
- Confidentiality will be respected

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Officer/Committee. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Officer/Committee and made available to the congregation. (Sample feedback forms pages 23-25)

### **8. 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.

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

### **9. Questions about This Policy**

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence to participants with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by *(Name of Accessibility Officer/Committee Chair)*.

## SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

### Sample notice of the Feedback Process

#### Sample 1

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for our participants with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our programs, goods and services to people with disabilities. Participant feedback forms are available (Name easily accessible place) or on our website (website address).

Please call (phone number) or e-mail (e-mail address) to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the box located (name easily accessible place)

Thank you:

(Name)

Accessibility Officer/Committee Member

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Participant Feedback Form

Thank you for attending (*Name*) United Church. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time you attended (*Name*) United Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Did we respond to your needs today (Circle one)?      Yes      No

Were our programs and services accessible to you? (Circle one)

Yes (please explain below)      Somewhat (please explain below)      No

Were our programs/service provided to you in an accessible manner (Circle one)?

Yes      Somewhat (please explain below)      NO (please explain below)

Please add any other comments you may have:

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Contact information (option)\*:

(\*Please note: There may be privacy implications for organizations collecting personal information. Places of worship should seek their own legal advice regarding the privacy implications of collecting personal information in this manner)

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Thank you

(*Name*)

Accessibility Officer/Committee Member

**SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK**

**Record of Participant Feedback**

Date feedback received: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information (if appropriate)\*:

(\*Please note: There may be privacy implications for organizations collecting personal information. Places of worship should seek their own legal advice regarding the privacy implications of collecting personal information in this manner)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Details:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action to be taken:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility Officer/Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_