

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Northlea United Church
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
Policy Statement
March, 2012



This policy contains statements that meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard and other items that are good practices.

Approved at the January 9, 2013 Board Meeting

This policy will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

1. Our Mission

The Mission of Northlea United Church is to be a dynamic witness – in its worship, its congregational life, and its outreach to its community – to the reality of its Christian faith and the commitment in that faith to the service of others.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Northlea 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

Northlea 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
- Fellowship
- Social Events
- Community Events
- Pastoral Care
- Youth and Adult Programs
- Music Programs

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 e-mail, postal service or personal visits if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

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3.3 Assistive Devices

- We are committed to serving people 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.
- Northlea 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:
 - Hearing impaired headsets to provide accessibility to the worship services;
 - Large Print Bulletins (provided as requested)
 - Large Print Hymn Books
 - Stair Lift to access all levels of the building
- 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.

3.4 Accessibility Committee/Liaison

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Liaison/establishing an Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Board.
- In 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 Liaison/Committee will have several roles:
 - The liaison/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 liaison/committee will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - The liaison/committee will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
 - The liaison/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.

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- The liaison/committee will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

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 Northlea United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees, if any, for support persons attending a function or event sponsored by or supported by Northlea United Church will be determined by the committee sponsoring or responsible for the function or the event.
- Participants will be informed of these fees by a notice that will be posted in Northlea United Church premises and in any advertising or communications regarding the function or event.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Northlea 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:

- Posting notices at the access point to the venue of the event;
- On Bulletin boards;
- Using e-mail or telephone tree;
- Web site notices.

In the case where the disruption is community wide Northlea United Church will ensure available notices are posted as appropriate.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

Northlea United Church's Accessibility Liaison/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:

- Church Staff;
- Board Members;
- Congregational Life Committee Members;
- Children and Youth Volunteers;

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- Such other volunteers as are deemed appropriate by the Liaison/Committee.

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Northlea 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 Northlea United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, suggestion box, feedback cards and personal representation to any member of the Church Board or the Church Staff.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison/Committee.
- Participants can expect to hear back within 14 days.
- Confidentiality will be respected

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Liaison/Committee. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Liaison/Committee and made available to the congregation.

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 Northlea 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 the Congregational Life Committee.

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 on the table in the Narthex or on our website www.northleaunited.ca.

Please call 416-425-5252 or e-mail office@northleaunited.ca to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the office.

Thank you:

(Name)
Accessibility Liaison/Committee Member

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Participant Feedback Form

Thank you for attending Northlea United Church. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time you attend Northlea United Church: _____

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

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

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

Was our church accessible for you (Circle one)?

Yes (please explain below) somewhat (please explain below) No

Please add any other comments you may have:

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)

Thank you

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(Name)

Accessibility Liaison/Committee Member

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received: _____

Name of participant (optional): _____

Contact information (if appropriate)*:

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Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Liaison/Committee Member: _____

Date: _____