

A WELCOMING PLACE OF WORSHIP IN BROOKE

Accessibility Standards for Service

Statement of Policy

2012



FIRST UNITED CHURCH - OWEN SOUND



This policy statement was approved by motion of First United Church Council on December 13, 2011. 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,

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OUR VISION

We worship God together as a friendly Church family, open to all, encouraging personal growth and inviting commitment to God and all creation.

OUR MISSION

We will provide opportunities for all ages to build a life-long relationship with God, through friendly and open Church worship, Sunday School and other related activities. Individually and as a Church Family, we are committed to reach out with our gifts to support the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of others, locally and world wide.

OUR VALUES AT FIRST UNITED

First United values a worship experience that is relevant, vibrant, meaningful and enjoyable through the use of prayer, music, drama and good preaching.

First United provides an opportunity for personal growth, for learning, to gain insight, for spiritual growth, to seek answers and to develop self esteem.

First United is a friendly community, welcoming all. It offers a neighbourly, helping church.

First United values personal commitment through faith, time, talent and individual gifts.

First United helps others and shares values through outreach to the local community, the city of Owen Sound, and the rest of the world.

First United is a church family. All are valued and invited to participate in the activities of the church.

First United values continuity and makes plans that respect our traditions while looking to the future.

1. **First United Church's Commitment.** In fulfilling our mission, we will respect and protect the dignity and independence of all people. We will provide an equal opportunity for those with special needs to access and benefit from our services and programs in the courteous and committed manner other participants would expect and enjoy.
2. **Providing Ministry, Programs, Facilities and Services to People with Special Needs.** First United Church is committed to a high standard in serving all those who enter our church, including people with special needs. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:
 - a. Worship.
 - b. Ministry programs.
 - c. Community and social events.
 - d. Landlord and tenant relationships.
- 2.1 **Communication.** We will communicate with people in ways that take into account their special needs. Written documents and video images will be in formats that are accessible. We will train ministry personnel, staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of special needs.
- 2.2 **Telephone Services.** We are committed to providing accessible telephone services. We will train ministry personnel, staff and volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. If telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or not available, we will offer to communicate using alternate forms including email, written documents or face-to-face.
- 2.3 **Assistive Devices.** We are committed to serving individuals who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our ministry, programs and facilities. We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access the sanctuary for worship and all other areas of the church (see Annex D). We undertake to familiarize all ministry personnel, staff and volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by persons with special needs in the church. First United Church will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other programs including the elevator, designated parking and seating, washroom facilities, wheelchairs, large print worship folders, audio amplification and visual projection. Ministry personnel, staff and volunteers will be trained on how to use and/or provide these assistive devices. Upon request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device, upon approval from the Church Council.
- 2.4 **Accessibility Responsibility and Liaison.** Responsibility for accessibility rests with Church Council Executive. The Church Secretary is designated as the Accessibility Liaison Person (ALP) and will report to Council Executive, including maintenance of this policy statement. The Council Executive and ALP shall undertake the following tasks:
 - Implementation of this policy.
 - Monitoring the outcome(s) of this policy.
 - Consulting as necessary with persons with special needs, including response and action to feedback.
 - Provision of accessibility training as may be required.
 - Communicating this policy to members, tenants and the public.

- Informing tenants and renters of this policy (ALP).
 - Ensuring that assistive devices provided by our church are in good order and that requests for such devices are considered by Church Council.
- 2.5 Accessibility Liaison Team. To assist Council Executive and the ALP with their responsibilities, First United Church shall form an Accessibility Liaison Team, consisting of members of the church and other individuals who have interest, knowledge or experience in issues related to accessibility. This team shall periodically review this policy and its implementation within First United Church, making recommendations for amendments and improvements to Council Executive where appropriate.
3. Use of Support Persons and Service Animals. We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by support persons and/or service animals, on those parts of our premises that are open to the public. We will ensure that ministry personnel, staff and volunteers are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a support person and/or a service animal. **A support person accompanying a person with a disability to an event requiring an admission fee will not be required to pay that admission fee.**
4. Notice of Temporary Disruption. First United Church will provide notice of planned or unexpected disruption in facilities or devices usually used by people with special needs. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and the description of alternative measures, if available.
5. Training for Ministry Personnel, Staff and Volunteers. First United Church Council shall be responsible for coordinating training of all ministry personnel, staff and volunteers who deal with members and the general public. Individuals in the following appointments and positions shall be trained in accordance with Annex B or D of this policy:
- a. Ministry personnel (Annex B).
 - b. Staff personnel (Annex B).
 - c. Council Members (shall review this policy and read Annex D).
 - d. Ushers and welcomers (Annex D).
 - e. Sunday School & nursery volunteers (Annex D).
 - f. Hospitality volunteers (Annex D).
6. Education. Prior to and periodically following the implementation of this policy, Church Council Executive shall ensure that the congregation of First United are made aware of these measures. Education and awareness shall include:
- a. Permanent posting of the complete policy outside the church office and on the church website (www.firstunited-os.com).
 - b. Announcements and notices, oral and written.
 - c. Reference in facility lease and rental contract documents.
 - d. Video presentations (if available).
 - e. Skits or other instruction intended for large groups.
7. Feedback Process. Our ultimate goal is to meet or surpass expectations of persons with special needs. We welcome and appreciate constructive feedback on this policy and its implementation. Feedback regarding how we provide ministry, programs and facility use to people with special needs can be made by email, verbally, or in other written forms to the ALP. Using the form at Appendix 1 to Annex A will facilitate the

feedback process. All feedback will be directed to Church Council Executive. Initiators of the feedback process can expect to hear back within 30 days. Confidentiality will be respected.

8. Modification of Policy. Church Council Executive is responsible for review and/or modification of this policy on an annual basis in January, having considered the impact of any amendments on people with special needs and their families.
9. Questions about this Policy. Any person with a question or comment about this policy, its implementation or impact may address those concerns to First United Church, attention: Church Secretary//ALP 519-376-1736 or **office@firstunited-os.com**.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

First United Church Owen Sound values your input as one means of improving accessibility for people with special needs. We want to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our ministry, programs, facilities and services. Feedback forms are available from the Church Office or from our website at **www.firstunited-os.com**.

Appendix 1 to Annex A of First United Church
Accessibility Standards of Service
Dated December 13, 2011

ACCESSIBILITY FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for being part of the community of First United Church. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's spiritual and physical needs. You may call the Church Office (519-376-1736) or email at **office@firstunited-os.com** to share your comments or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the letter box located on the door of the Church Office.

Please tell us the date and time you were at
our church:

Did we respond to your needs? (circle one)

YES

SOMEWHAT

NO

Please tell us about your accessibility experience:

Contact Information: (if you wish to be contacted regarding your feedback and comments, please provide this information)

Name:

Address:

Phone No.:

Email:

ACCESSIBILITY RESPONSE FORM

DATE FEEDBACK RECEIVED:

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

DETAILS OF FEEDBACK:

FOLLOW UP:

ACTION TAKEN:

Accessibility Liaison Person:

Date:

MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR CLERGY, PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Clergy and Paid Staff. Prior to or upon implementation, all clergy and paid staff shall participate in a formal training session to cover the following aspects of the AODA:
 - a. Review the “Accessibility Standard for Customer Service – Training Resource” booklet (also on-line at www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/programs/accessibility/customerService/).
 - b. Annually, as part of contract renewal, review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.
2. Volunteers, Renters and Other Individuals. Prior to the commencement of duty as a volunteer or use of First United Church facilities, the Minimum Training Requirement for Volunteers – Annex D, shall be read by each individual.

CORE PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR SERVICE – AODA REGULATION 429/07

4 Core Principles for Customer Service:

- a. Dignity – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
- b. Independence – when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- c. 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 alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access programs, goods or services).
- d. 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.

11 Standards for Customer Service:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
 - Policies – what you intend to do, including any rules for staff.
 - Practices – how you will go about doing the policies, the steps staff and volunteers are expected to take.
 - Procedures: what you actually do on a day-to-day basis, including how you offer and deliver services.
2. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the four core principles above.
3. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own assistive devices to access your goods and services and about any other measures your organization offers (assistive devices, services or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his/her disability.
5. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, explain why and see what other arrangements can be made.
6. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
7. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.

8. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
9. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics outlined in the customer service standard.
10. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities, and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.