

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED CHURCH

Accessibility Standards for
Customer Service Policy Statement
December 7, 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, 2005.

1. **Our Mission**

The Mission of St. Matthew's United Church is: ***“To make disciples for Jesus and to reveal the Glory of God in the world through our words and actions.”***

2. **Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, St. Matthew's United Church strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people of all abilities. We are also committed to giving all people 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 of all Abilities**

St. Matthew's United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas: ***worship, social events, fundraisers, etc.***

3.1 **Communication**

- We will communicate with people in ways that take into account their ability and styles of communication.
- We will provide publications in large print formats.
- We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of abilities.

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 email and relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

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 while accessing our programs, goods and services.

- St. Matthew's 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, projection, wheelchairs, and the elevator.
- Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device.

3.4 Accessibility Committee/Officer

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Officer to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Council.
- The Accessibility Officer will have several roles:
 - The officer will establish policies on providing accessible programs, goods and services to participants of all abilities that are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
 - The officer will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - The officer will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
 - The officer 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 Council.
 - The officer 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 who relies on a support person will be allowed to enter St. Matthew's United Church premises with his or her support person.
- ***Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to any church event***
- Participants will be informed of this policy by notice that will be posted in St. Matthew's United Church premises.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

St. Matthew's United Church will provide participants with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the assistive facilities or services usually

provided. 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: ***newspaper, signage, email, phone message and verbal message.***

6. Allergies

St. Matthew's endeavours to accommodate food and scent allergies and sensitivities

- With notification we can provide for special dietary needs.
- We endeavour to be a "scents"ative environment and we encourage participants to use scent free products.

7. Training for Staff and Volunteers

St. Matthew's 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: ***Ushers/greeters, Staff, Resource Centre personnel, Council members, and Volunteers including: Food Bank, Food Committee and Sunday School/Nursery personnel.***

8. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of St. Matthew's United Church is to meet and surpass expectations while serving participants of all abilities.

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

- Feedback regarding the way St. Matthew's United Church provides programs, goods and services to people of all abilities can be made by email, suggestion box, feedback card or verbally.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Officer.
- Participants can expect to hear back in ten (10) days.
- Confidentiality will be respected

Concerns will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Officer (***see appendices 1-3 on pages 6-8***)

The Accessibility Officer will make the feedback procedure available to the congregation.

9. Modifications to this or Other Policies

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

- No changes, therefore, will be made to this policy before considering the effect on people of all abilities or their families.
- Any policy of St. Matthew's United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with all abilities will be modified or removed.
- This policy applies to programs, services and events sponsored and run by St. Matthew's United Church.
- It is the responsibility of the individual renting facilities at St. Matthew's to ensure that accessibility is appropriate for their needs.

10. Questions about This Policy

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence to participants of all abilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by the Accessibility Officer, **Jackie Harper** at stmatt@bellnet.ca

Appendix #1

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Sample notice of the Feedback Process

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for all people. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our programs, goods and services to people of all abilities. Participant feedback forms are available at the parking lot door and front door or on our website: www.stmatthewsbelleville.com. You can also leave your feedback form in the box located at the parking lot door and front door.

Please call 613-967-1511 or e-mail stmatt@bellnet.ca to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy.

Thank you.

Jackie Harper,
Accessibility Officer

Appendix #2

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Participant Feedback Form

(All feedback will be treated in a confidential matter by the Accessibility Officer)

Thank you for visiting St. Matthew's United Church. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time you attended St. Matthew's United Church:

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

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

Yes Somewhat No

Contact information optional:

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Thank you
Jackie Harper
Accessibility Officer: stmatt@bellnet.ca

Appendix #3

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK

Record of Participant Feedback

(All feedback will be treated in a confidential matter by the Accessibility Officer)

Date feedback received:

Name of participant

Contact information

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Officer:

Date:
