

# WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Forest Hill United Church  
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service  
Policy Statement  
January 18, 2012



FOREST HILL UNITED CHURCH

2 Wembley Road, Toronto, ON M6C 2E9

[www.foresthilluc.org](http://www.foresthilluc.org) [accessibility@foresthilluc.org](mailto:accessibility@foresthilluc.org) 416 783-0879

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 Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, Forest Hill 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.

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

Forest Hill United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in study, worship, social and community events.

### **2.1 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.

### **2.2 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 if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

### **2.3 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.
- Forest Hill 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:
    - *Wheelchairs*
    - *Hearing Assist devices*
- 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.

## **2.4 Accessibility Committee/Liaison (email: [accessibility@foresthilluc.org](mailto:accessibility@foresthilluc.org))**

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Liaison to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Board/Council.
- The Accessibility Liaison will have several roles:
  - The liaison 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 will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
  - The liaison will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
  - The liaison 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.
  - The liaison will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

## **2. 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 Forest Hill United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to most church related events. If a fee will be charged for a support person at any individual event, the fees will be publicized in advance.
- Participants will be informed of these fees by a notice that will be posted on Forest Hill United Church premises and in any ads promoting the event.

## **4. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Forest Hill 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 our website and, for any known regular users of such devices, by telephone.

## **5. Training for Staff and Volunteers**

Forest Hill United Church's Accessibility Liaison 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:

Minister  
Administrative Assistant  
Verger  
Teaching staff  
Youth group leaders  
Greeters

**6. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of Forest Hill 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 Forest Hill United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail ([accessibility@foresthiluc.org](mailto:accessibility@foresthiluc.org)), verbally in person or by phone (416-783-0879), written feedback placed on offering plate, mailed or faxed (416 849-0404) to the church office.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison.
- Participants can expect to hear back in 5 days.
- Confidentiality will be respected

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

**7. 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 Forest Hill United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified.

**8. 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 Paul Cutler or Jay Potter.

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