

Policy name: accessibility	Date approved: November 16, 2011
Policy type: Executive Secretary Limitations	Review date: 2014-2015
Purpose of this policy: This policy outlines the accessibility customer service standards to be followed by the Executive Secretary.	

The Executive Secretary shall ensure that the accessibility customer service standards as outlined, below, are followed.

Note: 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 (AODA), 2005.

1. **Our Mission**

The mission of Toronto Conference is to strengthen Congregations, Pastoral Charges, Outreach Ministries, and Missions to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

To fulfill that mission, the Conference Executive will:

1. Make the best use of the human and financial resources available.
2. Ensure oversight and compliance within the polity of The United Church of Canada
3. Provide resources in the Presbyteries to promote the work in the following areas – program, property, personnel and public witness, with further support from the staff in the central Conference office.

2. **Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, Toronto Conference strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Toronto Conference is 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**

Toronto Conference is committed to excellence in serving all participants, including people with disabilities in the following areas:

- Conference annual meeting
- Executive meetings
- Committee meetings
- Consultations/events

3.1 Communication

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

3.2 Telephone Services

- Toronto Conference is committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants.
- Toronto Conference will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- Toronto Conference will offer to communicate with participants by other means if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

3.3 Assistive Devices

- Toronto Conference is committed to serving people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.
- Toronto Conference will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access applicable programs, goods and services.
- Toronto Conference will familiarize staff/volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.
- Upon a participant's request, Toronto Conference will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses.

3.4 Accessibility Liaison

- Toronto Conference designates its executive secretary as Accessibility Liaison to oversee all issues relating to accessibility.
- As the Accessibility Liaison, the executive secretary will have several responsibilities:
 - propose 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 for approval by the Conference Executive.
 - monitor Toronto Conference programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.

- ensure that assistive devices provided by the Conference are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met.
- be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

4. Use of Service Animals

- Toronto Conference is committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal on parts of our premises that are open to the public.
- Toronto Conference 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.

5. Support Persons

- Toronto Conference is 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 the premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Toronto Conference will provide participants with notice in the event of a planned disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities, and will make every effort to provide notice in the event of any unexpected disruption. 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 the most suitable means.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

As the Accessibility Liaison, the executive secretary 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.

7. Feedback Process

Toronto Conference strives to meet or 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 Toronto Conference provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by the means most suitable to the person providing feedback.

- All feedback will be directed to the executive secretary as the Accessibility Liaison.
- Participants can expect to hear back within two weeks.
- Confidentiality will be respected.

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the executive secretary as Accessibility Liaison. Complaint procedures will be documented by the executive secretary as Accessibility Liaison and made available to the Conference Executive.

8. Modifications to this or Other Policies

Toronto Conference is 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.
- Any policy of Toronto Conference 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 Accessibility Liaison, Rev. David Allen, Conference executive secretary at dallen@united-church.ca; 416-241-2677, ext. 226 or 1-800-446-4629, ext. 226; Toronto Conference, 65 Mayall Avenue, Downsview, ON M3L 1E7; fax 416-241-2689.

