

Stouffville United Church  
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service  
Policy Statement  
September 2012

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 Stouffville United Church is:

*Building Spirits; Building Lives*

## 2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Stouffville United Church strives at all times to provide its goods, programs, ministries 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 goods, programs, ministries and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, **in the same place, and in a similar way** as other participants.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Stouffville United Church meets the needs of all attending our congregation: that Stouffville United Church offers worship services that are accessible to all people in a manner that is compliant with the policy statement on the same or substantially the same basis and complies with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) by January 1, 2012.

## 3. Providing Programs, Ministries, Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Stouffville 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*
- *Children's Worship*
- *Pastoral Care*
- *Small group gatherings and studies*
- *Social events*
- *Fundraising*

### 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. Where reasonable and appropriate, such accommodations may include use of:
  - Pen and paper
  - Typed messages
  - Adjusted speaking styles
  - Gestures
  - Plain-language documents
  - Large-print documents
  - Text-based electronic communications
  - Accessible website technology
  - Communication boards

### 3.2 Telephone Services

- ↪ We are committed to providing telephone services to our participants wherever

possible.

- ↪ 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 alternate means 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, ministries, 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, ministries, 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, ministries, goods and services.
- ↪ Stouffville United Church will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other applicable programs, ministries, goods and services.
  - Ushers and other staff/volunteers will be trained on how to use and locate the assistive devices available on our premises, including:
    - ♣ *Stair lift*
    - ♣ *Wheelchairs*
    - ♣ *Assistive audio devices*
    - ♣ *Large screen for visual assistance*
    - ♣ *Large print bulletins*
    - ♣ *Paper and pencil*
    - ♣ *Emergency exit procedure*
- ↪ 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/Council.

### **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/Council.
- ↪ If 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, ministries, 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, ministries, 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/Council.
- 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 Stouffville United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Persons accompanied by support persons will be informed in advance of any additional fees for the support person.

#### **5. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Stouffville 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 the church website and/or telephone where possible. A notice of disruption will be posted on the East and South doors of the church building.

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

Stouffville 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:

- *Employees*
- *Ushers*
- *Visitation Team*
- *Members of Church Council*

#### **7. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of Stouffville United Church is to meet and surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities.

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

- Feedback regarding the way Stouffville United Church provides programs, ministries, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email,

verbally or in writing to the church office.

- ↪ All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison/Committee.
- ↪ Participants can expect to hear back in 5 business 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. (Sample feedback forms pages 23-25)

#### **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 Stouffville 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 Accessibility Committee.

## Notice of the Feedback Process

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, ministries, goods and services to people with disabilities. Participant feedback forms are available from the church office or on our website <http://www.stouffvilleuc.ca/>.

Please call 905-640-1163 or e-mail [info@stouffvilleuc.ca](mailto:info@stouffvilleuc.ca) to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form at the church office.

Thank you:

The Stouffville United Church Accessibility Committee

Participant Feedback Form

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

Please tell us the date and time you attend Stouffville 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 (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you

Stouffville United Church Accessibility Committee

Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information (if appropriate/relevant):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Details:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action to be taken:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility Liaison/Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled change in service at Stouffville United Church.

The disruption will occur on/from <date(s) – including time if relevant>

The nature of the disruption is as follows:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (eg. Service held at another church, lift is out of order)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (reason for disruption – scheduled change, maintenance etc.)

The following alternatives are available to assist you with this disruption:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (list where an alternate service is available)

On behalf of Stouffville United Church we thank you for your patience in this matter

<Contact Information>