

Thornhill United Church



Accessibility Policy

2011



Thornhill United Church

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By living our Christian faith, we answer God's call

September 2011

Dear Friends,

On January 1, 2012 the customer service portion of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act comes into effect.

Since your organization uses the facilities at Thornhill United Church, we are obliged to make you aware of our church's policy which can be read on the church's bulletin boards or at <http://www.thornhillunitedchurch.ca/>.

Most organizations will have created their own policy and have planned training for participants. If this has not taken place, we ask you to study the video at <http://www.york.ca/Services/Accessibility+Planning/Accessible+Customer+Service+Training.htm> or to contact us for other training opportunities.

Yours truly,

Catharine Montgomery

Catharine Montgomery
Chair of Council
Thornhill United Church
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Thornhill United Church Accessibility Policy

1. Our Mission

The Mission of Thornhill United Church is:

By living our Christian faith, we answer God's call.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Thornhill 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.

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

Thornhill 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:

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will try to 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.

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 in other ways 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 whenever possible.

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.

Thornhill 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.

Upon a participant's request, we will make a reasonable effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses, upon approval from the Council.

3.4 Accessibility Liaison

We are committed to designating an Accessibility Liaison to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the 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/Council.

The liaison 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 Thornhill United Church premises with his or her support person.

Fees will be charged for a support person accompanying a participant to programs dinners, entertainment.

Participants will be informed of these fees by a notice that will be posted in Thornhill United Church premises, in advertising and on tickets.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Thornhill 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 a notice on the front door.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

Thornhill 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:

Staff

Council

Greeters

Ushers

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Thornhill 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 Thornhill United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email and verbally. All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison/Committee.

Participants can expect to hear back in three months.

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

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 Thornhill 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

Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received:

Name of participant :

Details:

Follow up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Liaison

Date: _____