

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Accessibility Policy is to ensure that the United Native Friendship Centre (UNFC) complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 by providing accessible customer service to all people utilising UNFC goods, programs and services which are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- 1.2 Under the AODA, 2005 the government of Ontario has developed mandatory accessibility standards that aim to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people living with disabilities. All non-profit organisations with at least one employee in Ontario that provide goods and services to the public must comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) by January 1, 2012 which is consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

2. Scope

The Accessibility Policy applies to all UNFC Board members, employees, volunteers, and sub-contractors conducting business on behalf of UNFC, unless otherwise noted.

3. Definitions

The definition for “disability” precedes other definitions which are listed in alphabetical order in this Policy. (Note: The reader must know the definition as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code in order to gain a basic understanding of this policy.)

- 3.1 **Accessibility** refers to services that are provided to people living with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. People living with disabilities are provided with the same opportunity to access the same goods, programs and services and benefit from them in the same or similar way as all other customers. There is no single way to provide accessibility. It can be achieved in a variety of different ways.
- 3.2 **Assistive Devices** are used by people living with disabilities to help with daily living. They include but are not limited to products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable chalk boards and electronic communication devices.
- 3.3 **Assistive Technology** is equipment or software such as screen reading, audio recording and voice recognition which people with disabilities use to obtain information and communicate with others.

- 3.4 **Barrier** is defined as anything that prevents a person living with a disability from fully and equally participating in all aspects of society. Barriers may be physical, architectural, information, attitudinal or technological.
- 3.5 **Dignity** is service provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people. People with disabilities are not treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Dignity is one of the core principles established under the Customer Service Standards, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- 3.6 **Disability** the AODA uses the same definition of disability as the Ontario Human Rights Code:
- 3.6.1 Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- 3.6.2 A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- 3.6.3 A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- 3.6.4 A mental disorder; or
- 3.6.5 An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.1
- <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/Policies/PolicyDisAccom2/pdf>
- <http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/accessibility/customerService/trainingResourcesAODA/unit9.aspx>
- 3.7 **Equality of Opportunity** means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of the services it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide goods or services as others. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience. Equality of opportunity is one of the core principles established under the Customer Service Standards, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- 3.8 **Guide Dog** is defined as a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Blind Persons' Rights Act R.S.O 1990, c. B.7,s.1(1).
- 3.9 **Independence** is allowing a person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary help, or interference from others. Independence is one of the

core principles established under the Customer Service Standards, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

- 3.10 **Integration** – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the person to access goods or services. Integration is one of the core principles established under the Customer Service Standards, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- 3.11 **Service Animal** is an animal for a person living with a disability, if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability, or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- 3.12 **Support Person** means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.
- 3.13 **Customers** refer to board members, Friendship Centre staff, visitors, volunteers, suppliers, and/or general public.

4. Legislated Policy Components

Without limiting the requirements or expectations for accessibility, specific provisions shall be given to the following in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

4.1 Communication

4.1.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC will communicate with people living with disabilities in a way that takes into account their disability.
- b. We will train staff who interact with customers on how to interact and communicate with people living with various types of disabilities.
- c. We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- d. We will offer to communicate with customers by e-mail, TTY or relay service if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

4.1.2 Purpose: To ensure that people living with disabilities seeking goods and services will be offered a variety of ways to communicate to access goods and services.

4.2 Service Animals

4.2.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC is committed to welcoming people living with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- b. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the UNFC will look to other available measures to enable the person living with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the UNFC's goods and services.

4.2.2 Purpose: To ensure that people living with disabilities seeking goods or services continue to have the assistance of their service animal.

4.3 Support Persons

4.3.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC is committed to welcoming people living with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person living with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter UNFC premises with their support person. At no time will a person living with a disability be prevented from having access to their support person while on UNFC premises.
- b. Where fees for programs, goods or services are advertised or promoted by the UNFC, the UNFC will also provide advance notice of the fees with respect to support persons.

4.3.2 Purpose: To ensure that people living with disabilities seeking goods and services continue to access their support person.

4.4 Feedback

4.4.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC welcomes feedback regarding the way in which the UNFC provides goods and services to persons living with disabilities.
- b. Feedback about the manner by which the UNFC provides goods and services to persons living with disabilities can be provided in person, by telephone, by email, or otherwise.
- c. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be used to improve services. In most cases, a response to the feedback will be provided within 15 business days. The feedback will be provided in the same manner as submitted.

4.4.2 Purpose: To ensure that persons living with disabilities who access goods and services at the UNFC are provided equal access to providing feedback on the provision of goods or services provided through the UNFC.

4.5 Temporary Disruption of Services

4.5.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC will provide notice in the event of a planned/ scheduled or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by people living with disabilities to access the UNFC's programs, goods and services.
- b. A Disruption of Service Form or a Scheduled Service Disruption Form will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of time for the disruption, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed in relevant conspicuous locations within the UNFC premises, and when applicable, shall be placed on the UNFC website or answering machine or other reasonable method.

4.5.2 Purpose: To ensure that persons living with disabilities who access goods and services at the UNFC are provided with notice as soon they enter the UNFC office about any disruptions to services.

4.6 Assistive Devices

4.6.1 Policy Statement

When a person living with a disability requires assistive devices to access programs, goods or services at the UNFC office, they are permitted to use such devices. When applicable, the UNFC will provide assistive technology in order to allow the person living with a disability to access UNFC programs, goods or services while on the premises conducting UNFC business.

4.6.2 Purpose: To ensure that persons living with disabilities who require assistive devices while at the UNFC have continued usage of their assistive devices.

4.7 Training

4.7.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC will provide training about the accessible goods and services to the Executive Director, Board of Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors or others who may interact with members of the public who wish to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services provided by the UNFC according to the Customer Service Standard of the AODA (2005).
- b. Training will be delivered in a variety of formats and will be provided to new employees, Board of Directors, and volunteers as soon as practical after the commencement of their duties not to exceed 30 calendar days.

- c. Contractors must be trained prior to signing the contract with the UNFC.
- d. The UNFC will keep records of the training provided, including the training dates, names of trainers, location, type of training, names of participants and topics covered within the workshop.
- e. As stipulated by legislation, the training will include:
 - How to interact and communicate with persons living with a disability in a manner that takes into account their disability;
 - How to interact with persons living with a disability/disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person in order to access goods and services within the UNFC;
 - How to use equipment or devices available at the UNFC office or provided by the UNFC that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
 - What to do if a person living with a disability is having difficulty accessing UNFC programs, goods or services.

4.7.2 Purpose: To ensure that the Executive Director, Boards of Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors or others are trained on the elements of the Customer Service Standard of the AODA (2005).

4.8 Notice of Availability of Documents

4.8.1 Policy Statement

- a. This Policy, as well as other documents related to the provision of goods and services for people living with disabilities will be advertised through a variety of methods to ensure the public is aware of their existence.
- b. The accessibility documents will be made available on request and in a format that takes into account the person's disability/disabilities.

4.8.2 Purpose: To ensure that the Executive Director, Boards of Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors or others are knowledgeable of the various formats of documents available to persons living with disabilities that access programs, goods and services at the UNFC.

4.9 Billing

4.9.1 Policy Statement

- a. The UNFC is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request:
 - Hard copy;
 - Large print;
 - Html; and

- E mail.

- b. We will answer any questions customers have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

4.9.2 Purpose: To ensure that the Finance Manager and all members of the Bookkeeping Department are knowledgeable of the various formats for providing documents to customers that takes into account a person's disability/disabilities.

5. Application

5.1 The UNFC Accessibility Policy applies to the UNFC as a whole. The UNFC is committed to responding to the diverse needs of all community members and providing equal access to its programs, service and facilities for people living with disabilities.

5.2 The UNFC is equally committed to adhering to its legislative obligations with respect to the AODA. The UNFC will ensure compliance through the application of this policy and associated procedures.

6. Personal Information

Any personal information about an individual collected in respect of this policy, is pursuant to the Personal Health Information Privacy Act, 2004 and necessary in the execution of various related authorised functions and activities. Such information will only be used for the purpose and functions in the Policy. If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of this information, please contact the administrative authority responsible for this policy.

7. Related Policies, Procedures, Legislation and Other Documents

7.1 AODA, 2005 (AODA);

7.2 Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service); and

7.3 Human Rights Code Ontario.