

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

**GEORGIAN SHORES UNITED CHURCH
OWEN SOUND**

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT

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**

We come together as a new Christian congregation to live God's world through: welcoming and inclusive worship, responding to local and global needs, engaging children, offering music that touches the whole congregation, providing meaningful and relevant Christian Education.

2. **Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, Georgian Shores 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**

Georgian Shores 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, Sunday School, bible study, choir, social events, welcoming newcomers.

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.

3.2 Telephone Services

- We are committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants.
- We will train office staff and 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 email, mail, in writing, or face to face 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.
- We will familiarize ushers and other staff and volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.
- Georgian Shores United Church will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.
- Ushers and other staff and volunteers will be trained on how to use the assistive devices available on our premises including: lift and hearing device.
- 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 Council.

3.4 Accessibility Liaison

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Liaison to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with 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 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 Georgian Shores United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to an event sponsored by Georgian Shores United Church.

5. **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

- Georgian Shores 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 posted on the outside doors of the church.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

The Council of Georgian Shores United Church will have responsibility for ensuring that the Accessibility Policy is implemented and followed.

Georgian Shores 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. Training will take place minimally on an annual basis, or when new staff is added or new volunteers move into positions designated as requiring training.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained: all staff, members of council, ushers, leaders of youth and children's groups, leaders of adult groups, and members of the visitation committee.

The training will include:

- i) The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
- ii) how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- iii) how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- iv) how to use the assistive devices available on the premises that may assist with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- v) what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by the organization
- vi) current policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Georgian Shores 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 Georgian Shores United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, or by completing the Feedback Form which can be found in the church office or on the website: www.georgianshoresuc.org .
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison.
- Participants can expect to hear back from the Accessibility Liaison in 14 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.

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 Georgian Shores 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 Liaison, Wyn Platt .

Approved by Council: June 12, 2012

**GEORGIAN SHORES UNITED CHURCH
ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for our members and guests with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our programs and services to people with disabilities. Feedback forms are available from the church office or on our website at www.georgianshoresuc.org.

Please call 519-376-3890 or email office.gshoresuc@bmts.com to share your comments or to request a copy of our Accessibility Policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the box located outside the church office.

Thank you.

Accessibility Liaison

**GEORGIAN SHORES UNITED CHURCH
ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: FEEDBACK FORM**

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

Please tell us the date and time you attended Georgian Shores United Church:

Did we respond to your needs today (circle one)? Yes No

Were our programs/services 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.

Accessibility Liaison

**GEORGIAN SHORES UNITED CHURCH
ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: RECORD OF FEEDBACK**

Date feedback received: _____

Name of participant (optional): _____

Contact information (if appropriate): _____

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Liaison: _____

Date: _____

GEORGIAN SHORES UNITED CHURCH

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: TRAINING PLAN

Who will be trained?

- All staff members, Council members, ushers, Youth Group and Sunday School leaders

Who will do the training?

- The designated Accessibility Liaison

What will training involve?

- All persons being trained will be given a copy of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy Statement for Georgian Shores United Church to read.
- All persons will be asked to view the training video provided by the Ontario Government at www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/serve-ability/splash.html . The video is 45 minutes long. Viewers will be given the option of watching it at home on their own or arrangements will be made so that it can be watched at the church either individually or in a small group.
- All persons will be asked to complete an Awareness Quiz.
- On completion of the training, individuals will notify the Accessibility Liaison who will document that training has been completed.
- The Accessibility Liaison will be available to answer questions or to clarify points related to the Accessibility Policy.
- Training will be provided ongoing to individuals moving into any of the groups defined as requiring training.