



## **ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)**

### **PREAMBLE**

This policy establishes that goods and services provided by Wesley Urban Ministries (Wesley) shall be provided to persons with disabilities in accordance with the following key principles:

#### **Dignity**

Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

#### **Independence**

Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

#### **Equity/Equality of Outcome**

Service outcomes are the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

#### **Integration**

Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Disability (AODA 2005)**

A Disability is:

- a) 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, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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;

- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### **Service Animal (AODA 2005)**

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- a) It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

A service animal is not a pet.

### **Support Persons (AODA 2005)**

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 or services.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES POLICY**

Since its inception Wesley Urban Ministries has embraced diversity and actively sought the engagement of all members of our community. By doing so we believe it ensures that we are providing effective, quality services which meets the needs of, and strengthens our community.

As a result we applaud and welcome the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA). Our compliance measures include:

- Training of Staff
- Establishment of Policies, Procedures and Practices
- Welcoming people with disabilities and their service animals and/or support persons
- Encouraging and providing a method for individuals with disabilities to provide

feedback

These along with other specific measures will allow us to continue to provide **Support Every Step of the Way** and to **Decrease Barriers** and **Increase Opportunities** not only for individuals with disabilities but for all members of our community.

### **SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This Policy applies to all members of the Wesley Urban Ministries community. This community includes employees, volunteers, members of Wesley's Board of Directors, contractors, service providers, researchers and visitors, including invitees, guests or persons who have no ongoing connection to the institution but are providing a service.

All Contractual Relationships entered into by the Wesley are governed by a standard contract compliance clause which states that contractors must comply with this policy. Breach of this clause may result in penalties or cancellation of the contract.

### **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event that a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services and after consulting with the customer, Wesley Urban Ministries will accommodate the customer by providing an alternative where possible.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals, such as, but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, and other certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all Wesley Urban Ministries' facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public.

Service animals are not permitted: Where food preparation is being undertaken; or as otherwise disallowed by law.

In the rare case where a Service Animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

- alternate meeting format, such as teleconference /videoconference, where technology permits
- delivery of goods or service at an alternate time or location;
- other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure equality of outcome.

Owners of Service Animals may receive information from staff as to the location of fresh water for the service animal and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.

### **SUPPORT PERSONS**

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all Wesley Urban Ministries facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public, except:

- when there are fees applied against participants by a third party and the Support Person was not pre-registered and/or no vacancy exists.
- If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to a third party, the Support Person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost.
- If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to Wesley Urban Ministries, the Support Person is permitted to attend at no cost.
- Where a Support Person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises, the person with a disability shall be accompanied by a Support Person when on the premises.

The client shall determine whether a Support Person is necessary, however, where an employee believes that a Support Person should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the customer or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:

- when there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
- when the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
- when the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
- when the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and
- when the assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

Individual are required to provide their own Support Person(s).

## **NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTIONS**

In the event that a temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to Wesley Urban Ministries facilities, goods or service, Wesley will make the disruption known to customers in the following ways:

- Posting notices in visible locations close to the service that has been disrupted.
- Posting a message on the our Web site [www.wesley.ca](http://www.wesley.ca)

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other possible means to deliver the goods and service, such as: Wesley may use an alternative place and time to provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability (for example, change of classroom location or class cancellation); or Any other appropriate assistive measures available to deliver goods and services.

All notices of disruption shall include:

- the name of the event and/or service;
- the normal service location being impacted;
- alternate service locations;
- alternate service methods;
- hours of service availability;
- contact information; and
- other information suitable to the delivery of a good or service.

## **TRAINING**

Persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Wesley, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise shall receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Directors and Managers are responsible to ensure that all employees in their programs receive the mandatory AODA training.

Training will be offered in a number of formats, including online and face-to-face. Training will include the following:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of this policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;

- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY; and Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

Training shall be mandatory for all employees. All new employees are required to complete AODA training within one (1) month of hire. In addition all employees are required to receive additional training every three (3) years thereafter.

### **FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most appropriate to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.

Feedback may be provided directly to the immediate service provider or to:

**Director Human Resources  
Wesley Urban Ministries  
52 Catharine St. N.  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8R 1J1  
Telephone: (905) 528.5629 x 224  
Fax: (905) 528.9977  
E-mail: [hr@wesley.ca](mailto:hr@wesley.ca)**

Feedback will be used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided with a response in the format in which the feedback was received. The feedback may outline actions deemed appropriate, if any.

### **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

This policy, and all other documents considered critical to the delivery of goods and services, will be made available upon request. Documents will be available in an alternative format on request.

This policy will be posted on Wesley's website, and made available to all of the Wesley community.