

<b>West Neighbourhood House</b>	
Title:	<b>Accessible Customer Service Policy – Providing Goods and Services to People With Disabilities</b>
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	November 2011
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The West Neighbourhood House Accessible Customer Service Policy is designed to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, *Ontario Regulations 429/07*, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

### **Policy Statement**

West Neighbourhood House strives to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to providing people with disabilities the opportunity to access our goods and services in a similar way as other customers.

### **Applicability**

- Customers
- Program Participants
- Volunteers
- Placement Students
- Community groups who utilize West Neighbourhood House space
- Staff
- Contractors

### **Definitions**

- **Accommodation:** reasonable efforts to prevent and remove barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating meaningfully in the programs and services of West Neighbourhood House.
- **Assistive Device:** any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. This includes, but is not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, and electronic communication devices.
- **Barriers to Accessibility:** anything that prevents a person with disability from fully participating in all aspects of the programs and services offered by West Neighbourhood House. This includes, but is not limited to physical barriers, architectural barriers, information or communications barriers, attitudinal barriers, and technological barriers.

- **Customer:** any person who uses the services or participates in the activities of West Neighbourhood House.
- **Disability:** consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, disability under this policy means:
  - (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 impairment, 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 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:** an animal that is required by a person with a disability for reasons related to their disability. Where it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, documentation may be provided in the form of a letter from a regulated health professional.
- **Support Person:** a person who assists or interprets for a person with disability as they access the services of West Neighbourhood House, and who is not an employee of West Neighbourhood House.
- **Contractor:** any person or organization who acts on behalf of or as an agent of West Neighbourhood House.

## **General Principles**

West Neighbourhood House is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in accordance with the following principles:

- **Dignity** – service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.
- **Independence** – services shall support customer independence while respecting their rights to safety and personal privacy.
- **Equity/Equality** – service outcomes are the same for people with disabilities as for people 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.

## **1. Assistive Devices**

- 1.1 West Neighbourhood House is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. West Neighbourhood House will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing goods or services.
- 1.2 West Neighbourhood House will also ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices provided by West Neighbourhood House that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services and/or facilities.

## **2. Use of Service Animals and Support Person**

- 2.1 West Neighbourhood House welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal and/or support people. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. West Neighbourhood House will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- 2.2 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person will be allowed to enter West Neighbourhood House's premises with their Support Person. Any person who is accompanied by a Support Person will have unrestricted access to their Support Person while on West Neighbourhood House premises.
- 2.3 West Neighbourhood House will have procedures in place to address situations where a person is not accompanied by a Support Person, but a Support Person may be required for health or safety reasons.
- 2.4 West Neighbourhood House will notify program participants and the general public when there is a fee for a program, service or event, program or service. Fees for support people may or may not be charged depending on the event.

## **3. Communication**

West Neighbourhood House will interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities in a manner that meets their needs.

### **3.1 Telephone & Other Communication Technology Services**

West Neighbourhood House is committed to communicating with customers over the telephone or by other communication technology in clear and plain language and to speak clearly, and slowly if required. West Neighbourhood House will offer to communicate with customers by email, in person and by regular mail if telephone communication is not suitable or is not available.

### 3.2 Printed Materials (e.g. Billing, Newsletters, Notices, Program Information)

West Neighbourhood House is committed to providing accessible printed communication materials including invoices to all customers. Upon request, printed materials will be provided in the following formats: hard copy, large print, email. West Neighbourhood House will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the printed materials in person, by telephone or email.

## 4. Notice of Temporary Disruption

4.1 In the event that a temporary disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to West Neighbourhood House facilities, goods or services, West Neighbourhood House will provide customers with notice in a manner that is likely to come to their attention in a timely way.

## 5. Training

West Neighbourhood House shall ensure that training on accessible customer service in accordance with the AODA is provided to all employees, volunteers, students, contractors and others who provide goods and services on behalf of West Neighbourhood House regardless of role or level of public interaction. This training will be provided as soon as is practicable.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a Service Animal or a Support Person.
- How to use the wheelchair, walkers, elevators, lifts, etc., available at West Neighbourhood House's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with disability is having difficulty accessing West Neighbourhood House's goods and services.
- West Neighbourhood House's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

West Neighbourhood House shall maintain records of accessible customer service training, including the dates training was provided and individuals who received the training.

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

## 6. Feedback Process

- 6.1 West Neighbourhood House strives to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Feedback on services regarding how well expectations were met is welcomed and appreciated.
- 6.2 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 text and or email. West Neighbourhood House shall ensure the feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports on request.
- 6.3 Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider, at reception or can be directed to:

Operations Director  
West Neighbourhood House  
248 Ossington Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario, M6J 3A2  
(416) 532-4828 Ext. 147  
[info@westnh.org](mailto:info@westnh.org)

- 6.4 If requested, customers can expect to hear back within five (5) business days. Complaints will be addressed according to the procedure outlined in the West Neighbourhood House [Complaints Policy](#).

## **7. Modifications to this or other Policies**

West Neighbourhood House is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, West Neighbourhood House will consider the impact on people with disabilities when reviewing, revising and applying any Policies.

### **Questions about the Policy**

This Policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the Policy, or if the purpose of a Policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by or referred to West Neighbourhood House lead on Customer Service, the Operations Director.

## Acknowledgement of Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Customer Service Policy and have had it explained to me. I have also received training on the following:

1. Purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
2. Requirements of the customer service standard.
3. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
4. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or Support Person.
5. How to use the assistive devices on West Neighbourhood House premises.
6. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing West Neighbourhood House goods services.
7. West Neighbourhood House's Policy on Customer Service.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this policy and related policies of West Neighbourhood House as a condition of my employment.

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

Name of Employee/Volunteer/Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_