

West Neighbourhood House	
Title:	Accessible Customer Service Policy – Providing Goods and Services to People With Disabilities
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
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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 at all times to provide its 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 goods and services in a similar way as other customers.

Applicability

- General public
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Student Placements
- Community groups who utilize West Neighbourhood House space
- Staff (including members of management)
- Third Party Contractors

Definitions

- **Accommodation** means through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the service of West Neighbourhood House.
- **Assistive Device** is any device, used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products, such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, and electronic communication devices.
- **Barriers to Accessibility** means anything that prevents a person with disability from fully participating, in all aspects of the services of West Neighbourhood House. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, and a technological barrier.

- **Customer** for the purposes of this policy is any person who uses the services or participates in the activities of West Neighbourhood House, i.e., participant, member, client, volunteer, community member, student, etc.
- **Disability** under this policy has the same meaning as under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Specifically, disability 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** is an animal that is being used because of a person’s disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a medical practitioner.
- **Support Person** is a person who assists or interprets for a person with disability as they access the services of West Neighbourhood House. A Support Person is distinct from an employee who supports a customer within West Neighbourhood House.
- **Third Party Contractor** is any person or organization acting on behalf of or as an agent of the organization

General Principles and Procedures

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 their 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 We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We 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 We will also ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that we provide 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. We will also 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 his or Support Person on our premises. At no time will a person with disability who is accompanied by a Support Person be prevented from having access to their Support Person while on our premises.
- 2.3 West Neighbourhood House will notify members, 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. Participants will be notified if a fee will be charged.

3. Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.1 Telephone & Other Communication Technology Services

We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone or by other communication technology in clear and plain language and to speak clearly, and slowly if required. We 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)

We are committed to providing accessible printed communication materials including invoices to all our customers. For this reason, upon request, printed materials will be provided in the following formats, currently available: hard copy, large print, email. We 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, we will provide customers with notice in the following ways:

- Staff will post a notice of the service disruption on social media, message boards, public entrances, service counters and other visible locations close to the service that has been disrupted.
- A notice will be posted on the West Neighbourhood House website. The notice will include the information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

5. Training for Staff

West Neighbourhood House will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. This training will be provided as soon as is practicable after staff commence their duties.

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 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 in accessing West Neighbourhood House's goods and services.
- West Neighbourhood House's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

All staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

6. Feedback Process

- 6.1 The ultimate goal of West Neighbourhood House is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.
- 6.2 Feedback regarding the way West Neighbourhood House provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, feedback form, etc. 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 will make sure our 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
- 6.4 If requested, customers can expect to hear back within five 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

We are 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: _____