



## **EASTERN SYNOD POLICY ON ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (AODA)**

### **ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (AODA) POLICY**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standards included in the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It applies to the delivery of all programs and services provided by the Eastern Synod office. The Eastern Synod shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Customer** includes colleagues asking for assistance, members, volunteers, partners, children and individuals accessing goods and services of the office of the Eastern Synod.

An **Assistive Device** is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. Includes, but not limited to: qualified interpreters, walkers, assistive listening systems, television captioning and decoders, video tapes, both open and closed captioned, TTY/Ds, transcriptions, readers, taped texts, Braille and large print materials. Any similar device or service that is needed to make spoken or aural language accessible is also considered an auxiliary aid.

**Disability** means 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 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 a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, a mental disorder, or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

**Sensory Impaired** means a person who is hard of hearing, deaf, partially sighted and/or blind or physically unable to speak.

**Sign Language and Sign Systems** mean visual or tactile ways of communicating thoughts, ideas and feeling through American Sign Language or manual signs and gestures with specifically defined vocabulary.

#### **GUIDELINES**

##### **A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

The Eastern Synod will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all people receive the same value and quality;

- Allowing people with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing programs and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing programs and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

## **B. The Use of Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing programs or services provided by the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure access.

## **C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs**

A person with a disability, accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog, will be allowed access to the offices of the Eastern Synod and venues used for Eastern Synod events (ex. Synod Assembly).

## **D. The Use of Support Persons**

Support persons are welcomed to provide help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or to provide access to programs or services.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the person with the disability, prior to a conversation taking place.

## **E. Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the Eastern Synod. The Eastern Synod will provide notice of service disruptions that affect person with disabilities, including the reason for the disruption, the length of the disruption, and a description of available alternatives if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

## **F. Customer Feedback**

The Eastern Synod shall welcome and accept feedback in a variety of formats. Staff assistance is available to support providing feedback.

Feedback can be submitted to the Eastern Synod Health and Safety Representative at (519) 743-1461.

Customers who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

## **G. Training**

Under the AODA legislation, the Eastern Synod is required to provide staff with accessibility standard training. Content of the training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - use assistive devices;
  - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide to help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.
- Eastern Synod policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

Approved by Synod Council – April 2017