



# **CFUW Ontario Council Accessibility Customer Service Policy 2011-2012**

**Respectfully Submitted by**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction-----	3
Legislation-----	3
Definition of Disability-----	4
What is a Barrier-----	4
Physical Barrier-----	4
Architectural Barrier-----	4
Information Barrier-----	4
Communication Barrier-----	4
Technological Barrier-----	4
Policy or Practice Barrier-----	4
Attitudinal Barrier-----	4
Corporate Accessibility-----	5
Background-----	5
Purpose-----	5
General Principles and Implementation-----	6
a) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with disabilities-----	6
b) Assistive Devices-----	6
c) Service Animals-----	6
d) Support Persons-----	7
e) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities-----	7
f) Training-----	7
g) Member/Guest Service Feedback-----	8
Rented Facilities-----	8
Communication of the plan-----	9
Resources-----	9
CFUW Ontario Council Member Locations-----	10

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Canadian Federation of University Women Ontario Council is a voluntary, non-profit, self-funded, non-partisan, non-governmental organization of Graduate Women, Students and Associate Members living in urban and rural areas across Ontario. CFUW Ontario Council is composed of 57 clubs within Ontario. Our members are active in public affairs, advocating on public education, justice, health and environmental issues as well as the status of women and human rights. Ontario Council is part of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) and has links to the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

### **CFUW Ontario Council is committed to:**

- The pursuit of knowledge
- The promotion of education
- The improvement of the status of women and girls
- An active participation in public affairs in a spirit of cooperation and friendship.

### **Ontario Council was created to:**

- To promote cooperation and facilitate communication of information and ideas among CFUW Clubs in Ontario.
- To promote the policies and programmes of CFUW.
- To encourage and initiate studies with respect to matters of a provincial nature.
- To make representation to the appropriate provincial authorities consistent with Ontario Council policy.
- To promote an understanding of provincial and national issues and their implications through dialogue among member Clubs.

*SOURCE: Constitution and Bylaws, CFUW Ontario Council*

## **LEGISLATION**

In 2001, the Province of Ontario introduced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), which, among other things, mandated the public sector to create an annual accessibility plan to identify, remove or prevent barriers to its goods and services.

Subsequently, in June 2005, the Province introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing and enforcing a number of accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by the year 2025. The AODA mandates both the public and private sectors.

## DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The AODA adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. “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 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.
- (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*.

## WHAT IS A BARRIER?

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**Physical Barrier:** objects added to the environment – doors, windows, elevators, furniture, etc.

**Architectural Barrier:** building design, area adjacent to the building, shape of room, size of doorways, etc.

**Information Barrier:** inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.

**Communication Barrier:** difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone, difficulties interacting with receptionists or other staff, difficulties receiving training.

**Technological Barrier:** computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, assistive technologies

**Policy or Practice Barrier:** rules, regulations and protocols that prevent one performing their job satisfactorily, or from serving the public, or that restrict participation.

**Attitudinal Barrier:** staff who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, discriminatory behaviours

## **CORPORATE ACCESSIBILITY**

CFUW Ontario Council is dedicated to providing high quality services for its members and guests. In doing so, we recognize the diverse needs of our membership and strive to provide services and facilities that are accessible for everyone. CFUW Ontario Council promotes accessibility through the development of its policies, procedures and practices that are consistent with the core principles of integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.

## **BACKGROUND**

CFUW Ontario Council established an Advisory Committee on Accessibility in 2011, in compliance with the Provincial Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 mandated accessibility advisory committees.

CFUW Ontario Council, like other organizations in Ontario, will prepare an annual Accessibility Plan to address the issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in its operation. Ultimately, the annual Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede members and visitors from accessing and using CFUW Ontario Council services. Accessibility planning is ingrained in the normal operating policies and procedures of CFUW Ontario Council.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to recognize CFUW Ontario Council's obligation to facilitate the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)*, and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*) and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Member/Guest feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:**

### **a) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities:**

CFUW Ontario Council will use reasonable efforts to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- CFUW Ontario Council goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of the CFUW Ontario Council goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CFUW Ontario Council goods or services and,
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from CFUW Ontario Council goods and services.

### **b) Assistive Devices**

A person with a disability is expected to provide their individual assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from CFUW Ontario Council's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where CFUW Ontario Council has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations and others, CFUW Ontario Council may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using and benefiting from CFUW Ontario Council goods and services, where CFUW Ontario Council has such other measures available. It should be noted, it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times. In the case where a deaf translator is needed the person with a disability arranges for their own translator and CFUW Ontario Council underwrites the bill. Any such arrangement should be approved ahead of a meeting as there may be more than one person with a disability needing that service, in which case only one deaf translator would be paid for by CFUW Ontario Council.

### **c) Service Animals:**

Persons with a disability may enter premises used by CFUW Ontario Council accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, CFUW Ontario Council will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CFUW Ontario Council goods and services. The safety, care and protection of the community at large will take priority over any individual. If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, CFUW Ontario Council may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability. CFUW Ontario Council may also, or instead, ask for a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school. It should be noted it is the

responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her service animal is kept in control at all times.

#### **d) Support Persons**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the rented premises. If it is not readily apparent the support person is required, CFUW Ontario Council may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons relating to his/her disability. CFUW Ontario Council may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if 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 rented premises. Where fees for services advertised or promoted by CFUW Ontario Council, unless otherwise communicated in advance, the fee charged to a support person accompanying the disabled person will be fifty (50) percent of the value charged for an event/a service to the disabled person. CFUW Ontario Council may ask, at the time of purchase, the person with the disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons related to his/her disability.

#### **e) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities**

Temporary disruptions CFUW Ontario Council services or facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within CFUW Ontario Council's control or knowledge. CFUW Ontario Council will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. If the disruption is anticipated, CFUW Ontario Council will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. CFUW Ontario Council will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on CFUW Ontario Council website, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

#### **f) Training**

All CFUW Ontario Council volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of CFUW Ontario Council and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training within six months of beginning their duties. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his/her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

Contractors and agents providing services on behalf of CFUW Ontario Council to the public will be required to ensure their staff has received the appropriate training. Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon the individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to CFUW Ontario Council's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. CFUW

Ontario Council will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided and the number of persons trained. Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:

- (i) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- (ii) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- (iii) The process for people to provide feedback to CFUW Ontario Council about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how CFUW Ontario Council responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- (iv) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person to access goods and services;
- (v) Information on other CFUW Ontario Council policies, practices, and procedures dealing with the AODA;
- (vi) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- (vii) How to use equipment or devices available on CFUW Ontario Council rented premises or provided by CFUW Ontario Council that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
- (viii) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing CFUW Ontario Council goods and services.

#### **g) Member/Guest Service Feedback**

CFUW Ontario Council welcomes all feedback on our accessible member service. Contact us in person, by mail, phone, fax or TTY, or contact the Accessibility Co-ordinator/Ontario Council President directly.

#### **RENTED FACILITIES**

CFUW Ontario Council where possible, and available will seek out and engage in rental agreement with facilities that incorporate the following accessibility improvements:

- Listening assistive devices available for use
- Talking elevators
- Auto-open and wider doorways throughout public corridors
- Lever handles on doors
- Lower accessible customer service counters at all departments



- Washrooms with larger dimensions, wider turning radiuses and automatic amenities, such as auto-door openers, auto-flush, motion sensing taps and hand dryers, along with various 'green' improvements that include motion-activated lighting.

In creating an inclusive experience within CFUW Ontario Council rented facilities, accessibility will continue to be a priority.

## **COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN**

CFUW Ontario Council's accessibility plan is posted on the website at <http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca> and hard copies are available. The plan can be made available in accessible formats, on request.

## **RESOURCES**

**Ministry of Community and Social Services "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities"**  
(Service Ontario) web site. [www.AccessON.ca](http://www.AccessON.ca)

### **ServiceOntario Publications**

**Phone: 1-800-668-9938 or TTY: 1-800-268-7095**

## CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL MEMBER LOCATIONS

Ajax - Pickering	Norfolk
Aurora - Newmarket	North Bay
Barrie & District	North Toronto
Belleville & District	North York
Brampton	Northumberland
Brantford	Oakville
Burlington	Orangeville & District
Cambridge	Orillia
Chatham-Kent	Orleans
Cornwall & District	Oshawa & District
Etobicoke	Ottawa
Georgetown	Owen Sound & Area
Georgian Triangle	Perth & District
Grimsby	Peterborough
Guelph	Renfrew & District
Haliburton Highlands	Sarnia Lambton
Hamilton	Saugeen
Kanata	Scarborough
Kincardine	Southport
Kingston	St. Catharines
Kitchener - Waterloo	St. Thomas
Leaside - East York	Stratford
London	Sudbury
Markham- Unionville	Thunder Bay
Milton & District	Toronto
Mississauga	Vaughan
Muskoka	Welland & District
Nepean	Windsor
Niagara Falls	