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58 Queen Street South, Kitchener, Ontario • N2G 1V6 • Telephone (519) 743-1151 • Fax (519) 743-3840

### **Accessible Customer Service Policy**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005* in relation to our funding from the Government of Ontario, or from the Government of Canada.

The Working Centre is a volunteer inspired venture that seeks to give individuals and groups access to tools and opportunities to become involved in the building of community. The ideas behind The Working Centre revolve around the basic building blocks necessary to create community.

Some of these ideas, as we have defined them include access to tools, work as gift, respect for the environment, serving others, local democracy, reclaiming buildings and turning them into common public spaces, and the development of sustainable community projects that serve community needs by involving project participants in the core of the work.

#### **Commitment to Accessibility**

We are committed to creating an accessible and inclusive community. This applies to all our projects, buildings, and activities. We welcome everyone into our spaces guided by principles of inclusion, accountability, integrity, and thoughtful responsiveness.

For the purposes of this policy, this includes people

- who rely on assistive devices
- who rely on service animals
- who rely on a support person to accompany them
- who have a physical or mental disability

The Working Centre has a reputation for working with those who are hardest to serve. We receive many referrals from and work collaboratively with disability service organizations, many of whom we partner with in a variety of ways including Extend A Family, Bridges to Belonging, CMHA, DSO, K-W Habilitation, Canadian Hearing Society and others. Our public spaces are wheel chair accessible and friendly. We measure accessibility primarily in the way that we deliver services – we adapt around the needs of each person we serve, creating an environment built on ability and creative problem-solving. If someone is unsure how to find us, we offer to meet them at the bus station or at a nearby coffee shop. If someone doesn't feel safe in wide open spaces, we find a quiet corner. If someone has a loud voice or is disruptive, we don't exclude them, we find a way to help them in ways that don't distract others. We practice never saying no – so how do we turn each moment into a yes.

### **Commitment to Accessible Design of Community Spaces**

Community spaces in which we are hosting activities are intentionally designed to promote accessibility and facilitate community inclusion as much as possible.

Accessibility devices are important and we welcome their use in our spaces. We also find that it is important to be adaptive in our welcome and creative problem-solving. Significantly in this area, we assist many people facing mental health challenges; people with developmental disabilities; people who are facing stress related to trauma; and a growing number of people who are defined as being on the autism spectrum. Word of mouth is our prime form of referral – people recommend us to their friends.

### **Commitment to Accessible Customer Feedback**

The Working Centre provides people with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided, including for people with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all participants, and notice of the process will be made available through our website. Feedback is welcome in various forms. This includes

- coming in person to any of our locations
- calling 519-743-1151
- writing to  
Community Feedback  
The Working Centre  
58 Queen Street South  
Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6
- writing to [genmail@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:genmail@theworkingcentre.org)
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People who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with information regarding any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

### **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 Working Centre. In the event of temporary disruptions of facilities or services of The Working Centre, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice to the community, including people with disabilities or other concerns. In some situations, such as unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

Notifications will be followed in multiple ways. This includes

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the entrances or nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or The Working Centre website
- contacting participants with appointments, workshops, or other planned activities
- verbally notifying participants when they are making an appointment or calling with inquiries
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances

### **Commitment to Accessible Employment and Training**

For individuals applying to work in our spaces we consult with them about accommodations for the interview process as needed. We include clarification of accommodations as a part of our offer of employment and review these plans regularly to make sure they are continuing to meet the needs of the employee.

We provide extensive orientation around accessibility, ensuring our spaces and interactions are reflecting our ongoing efforts of inclusion. These practices build on the guidelines provided by the AODA and other government resources. Building capacities around this aspect is a consistent piece in our regular project meetings, and we actively cultivate collaboration with other community partners and cultural groups to continue to develop our approach.

**For questions or further discussion of this policy, please feel free to contact us by phone at 519-743-1151, or email [genmail@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:genmail@theworkingcentre.org). You are also welcome to come in person to 58 Queen Street South.**