

**Accessible Customer Service Plan for  
Providing Service to People with Disabilities**

**Our Commitment**

ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities.

We are committed to establishing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of our services to persons with disabilities.

We shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies and practices are consistent with the following principles:

1. Our services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
2. If a person with a disability wishes to access our services, we will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that they are able to do so;
3. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.

ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN has several existing and former clients with various physical challenges. We have experience in customizing our services, communication and response to these individuals. For example:

1. A terminally ill client has attended at our offices to obtain our services. He required assistance to access our premises and the assistance of a personal support person who accompanied him, and required an oxygen tank;
2. We have provided tax preparation services for the past several years to a client who is deaf, and would use a similar process if another deaf client wished to access our services, as follows:
  - Email communication and scanning and emailing of documentation as required for initial review and to answer questions;



- Face to face meetings to review and discuss work which cannot be communicated through email. During these meetings communication is handled through a combination of writing, hand signals and lip and face reading;
- 3. A senior who had recently sustained injuries in a fall was unable to attend our offices for accounting services. Our staff attended at his home on two occasions to complete the required work.
- 4. Another senior was unable to read documentation due to visual impairment. ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN requested the client's Power of Attorney (a family member) to be briefed and allowed to attend the meeting as independent verification. When conflict arose at the meeting between the family members, a third-party professional was contacted to provide independent approval of the document to be signed.

### **Assistive Devices**

We will strive to ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

### **Communication**

ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN will make every effort to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

### **Service animals**

ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN has clients who are in the business of training and/or rehabilitating dogs. Some of these dogs are "comfort animals" who visit seniors and disabled persons. These dogs are welcome on our premises in the areas that are open to the public, as would be any other service animal required by a disabled person for assistance.

### **Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will always be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

### **Training for Staff**

ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN will provide training to its employees, sub-contractors or other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:



All full and part-time staff employed by ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN and all sub-contractors who provide service to ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN.

This training will be provided to staff within one week from their start date with ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN.

Training will include:

Requiring each employee, within one week of their start date, to read (and initial to signify their understanding of) this Plan, as well as:

- The attached document, “Accessibility Standard for Customer Service training tips for employees (for organizations with fewer than 20 employees) to learn about:
  - 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 (i.e. do not distract a service animal from performing its duties).
- The attached document, “A Way With Words – Terminology Guide Concerning Persons with Disabilities” distributed by Human Resources Development Canada, to learn about the proper way to refer to persons with disabilities.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our plan.

**What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services:**

If a disabled person cannot be accommodated on our premises and access our services due to the physical layout of our office or other physical barriers, we will take the following actions to remedy this situation:

- Ask the person if they have a preference how to proceed. For example, they may have access to equipment at their home of which we are unaware but which could possibly enable us to communicate and interact with them for the purpose of providing our service (telecommunications equipment with TTY service for a person who is deaf).



- Offer to attend at their home or at another location of their choice to provide our services.
- Offer to work with a third party of their choice to facilitate provision of our services.

**Notification of Accessibility Standard**

We will post a notice in a clearly visible location in our reception area and on our website to describe our processes and policies regarding accessibility, so that all clients and prospective clients are aware of our willingness and ability to accommodate and serve disabled persons.

**Feedback Process Invitation**

We invite clients and members of the public who wish to provide feedback on the way ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN provides services to people with disabilities to speak to any member of our staff or send us an email directly or through link available on our website.

All feedback will be directed to Linda Doughty or the acting Office Administrator. Customers can expect to hear back in five business days.

Complaints will be addressed according to our Firm's regular complaint management process within one week. ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN will take all necessary action to resolve any issue which needs to be addressed as communicated by our client(s) or prospective client(s).

**Modifications to This or other Policies**

Any policy of ACCOUNTANTS on MAIN that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

We will conduct a yearly review of our Accessibility Plan and revise it to include new information and/or experiences in interacting with disabled persons during the previous year in an effort to consistently improve our responses and relationships with disabled persons.

