



## **ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

### **OUR MISSION**

The Mission of the **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** is “to provide quality structure and services to our Members so that they are enabled to serve the consumer in a knowledgeable and professional manner.”

### **ARTICLE 1**

#### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

In fulfilling its mission, **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity, independence and full social inclusion of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

### **ARTICLE 2**

#### **OUR COMMITMENT**

**REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** is committed to serving all our customers including those with disabilities in ways that meet or exceed their expectations. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following manner:

#### 2.1 Communication

When communicating with customers with disabilities, we shall do so in ways that take into account their disability. Staff and others who act on **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound**'s behalf who communicate with customers will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities in ways that will best meet their needs.

#### 2.2 Telephone Services

- (a) We are committed to providing accessible telephone services to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- (b) We will offer to communicate with customers by email or regular mail if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

#### 2.3 Use of assistive devices, service animals and support persons

- (a) Assistive devices

- (i) We are committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will train our staff to familiarize them with various assistive devices available on our premises.
- (ii) Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. Exceptions may occur in situations where **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** has determined that 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, if a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services, an alternative accommodation shall be provided where possible.

(b) Service animals

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the areas of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties unless otherwise prohibited by law. We will also ensure that all staff dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

(c) Support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter premises open to the public or other third parties with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

2.4 Fees

*Where there is a fee associated with participating in a **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** conference, event, course, etc. the support person is permitted to attend at no cost. Please note that the support person is responsible for other services such as food, lodging, etc., however **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** will work to facilitate payment arrangements in this regard.*

2.5 Notice requirements re: service animals and support persons

As space for **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** organized conferences, events, courses, etc. may be limited and to ensure they can be accommodated, customers need to provide notice and/or provide documentation that they require the support of a service animal or support person.

2.6 Notice of temporary disruption

- (a) **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

- (b) The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.
- (c) If the disruption is long-term, an announcement will also be posted on the organization website to inform all customers of the location, duration of the disruption and alternate solutions.

## 2.7 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers and will make every effort to provide alternative formats of invoices in a timely manner upon request.

## 2.8 Training for staff

- (a) **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** will provide customer services 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.
- (b) This training will be provided in the Employee Orientation package that staff receive when hired.
- (c) Training will include the following:
  - (i) The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards under the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
  - (ii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
  - (iii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
  - (iv) Familiarize employees with personal assistive devices and train employees on how to use devices on premise, such as automatic doors, TTY, etc., that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
  - (v) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** goods and services
  - (vi) **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound**'s policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- (d) Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

## 2.9 Feedback process

- (a) Since the ultimate goal of **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities, comments on how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by contacting:

- (i) By Telephone – **519-364-3827**
- (ii) By E-Mail – send comments to **eo@ragbos.com** and reference “accessible customer service” in the subject line
- (iii) In Person or by Mail:

**REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound  
517 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lower Level, Hanover, ON N4N 1R4**

(There is a lift available on the premises to take you from street level to lower level. Simply ring the doorbell located on the right side of the lift for assistance)

If sent by mail, please address to the attention of: **Anne Schneider, Executive Officer**

- (b) Feedback will be used to improve **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound**'s customer service. Customers can expect to hear back from **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** within twelve (12) business days in the format in which the feedback was received.

#### 2.10 Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to developing and updating customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

#### 2.11 Questions about this policy

- (a) 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, please contact **REALTORS® Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound** as outlined under the ***Feedback*** section of this policy.

Copies of this policy and any other documents required by the Customer Service Standards are available upon request. Such documents will be provided in an alternative format upon request within a reasonable time.