

The LCO's Project on the Law as it Affects Persons with Disabilities

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Purpose of the Project:

The lives of persons with disabilities are shaped by a complicated web of laws and policies, creating a fragmented and often daunting system for those who must navigate it. This system includes laws or policies that directly target persons with disabilities, as well as general laws and policies that may affect persons with disabilities as part of the general population. The Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) is creating an evaluative framework to help evaluate new or existing laws, policies and practices and understand their impact on persons with disabilities.

Who Can Use This Evaluative Framework:

The ultimate outcome of the project, a *Framework for the Law as it Affects Persons with Disabilities* will be of assistance to anyone who develops, implements or assesses laws, policies or practices that may affect persons with disabilities, including:

- Legislators, courts and policy-makers,
- Advocacy organizations and community groups that deal with issues affecting persons with disabilities, and
- Public or private organizations that develop or administer policies or programs that could affect persons with disabilities.

The LCO hopes that ultimately the *Framework* will benefit persons with disabilities by making the law more effective, just and accessible.

What We Have Done So Far:

- The LCO has formed an Advisory Group made up of academics, legal and other service providers, government representatives, advocates and community organizations.
- In 2009, the LCO conducted a preliminary consultation to identify the scope of the project and propose preliminary principles.
- The LCO funded research papers from experts in the field on issues related to the project, as well as carrying out considerable internal research.
- In 2010, the LCO carried out extensive consultations with persons with disabilities and with organizations that serve, represent or advocate for persons with disabilities. This included 17 focus groups in 5 locations across Ontario. We spoke with over 100 individuals and close to 60 representatives of organizations.
- In the late summer of 2011, the LCO released a consultation paper, and received and reviewed submissions from a range of individuals and organizations.

Next Steps:

The LCO will gather feedback on the *Draft Framework* during the spring of 2012. Based on the feedback and the LCO's continuing research, the LCO anticipates releasing a final *Framework* and *Report* in mid-2012.