

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The Law Commission of Ontario has been committed to accommodation and accessibility for members of the public who participate in its activities since its creation, consistent with our mandate of “access to justice” and the Ontario Human Rights Code. We have now reduced the commitment to writing. This Accessibility Policy has been developed independently of the requirements of, but has been assessed against, the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and, in particular, Reg. 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service thereunder, and the Ontario Human Rights Code. This Accessibility Policy was approved by the LCO Board of Governors in 2012.

The Executive Director of the LCO is responsible for ensuring that the LCO makes every reasonable effort to conform to this policy.

1. Statement of Commitment

The Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) affirms its commitment to undertake its activities in a manner that provides substantively equal treatment to all persons participating in those activities and emphasizes accessibility, independence and human dignity. Wherever possible, the LCO will engage in activities in a way that will not require specific accommodation in order to permit the participation of persons with disabilities. Where this is not possible, the LCO will make all reasonable efforts to provide individual accommodation that will facilitate the individual’s participation.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The LCO’s activities include legal research, the writing of consultation papers and reports relating to law reform of specific areas of the law; consultations related to law reform projects and general outreach about the LCO; and organization of conferences and other events. The purpose of this policy is to communicate to persons who participate in these activities that the staff members and others at the LCO will undertake them in a manner that is consistent with the goals of respect for the dignity and independence of all persons, including persons living with disabilities; permits participation in a manner that enables persons with disabilities to benefit from the LCO’s activities in the same place and in a similar way as other participants; and provides opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to and benefit from the LCO’s activities equal to the opportunities of other participants.

3. Application of Policy

This policy applies to the LCO's activities that involve the participation of members of the public and to all persons who are involved in undertaking these activities, including legal and administrative staff and volunteers.

These activities include: access to public LCO documents; participation in consultations, including in focus groups, in-person or telephone interviews or on the web; providing feedback to consultation papers and interim reports; accessing the LCO's website; and contacting the LCO in writing, by email and by telephone.

4. Providing Accessible Participation in the LCO's Activities

The LCO is located in the Ignat Kaneff Building at York University, home of Osgoode Hall Law School. Accessibility was a factor in the design of the building. The LCO's premises are accessible. The LCO is able to share in efforts by Osgoode and York to make their premises and services accessible.

The following are examples of how the LCO will make reasonable efforts to provide accessible participation by the public in its activities:

- offering consultation documents and reports in a variety of formats, on request;
- providing a variety of means of feedback to documents released to the public;
- posting consultation documents and reports in html, as well as PDF;
- conducting consultations in facilities that are accessible for persons with mobility related disabilities;
- conducting consultations in a manner that is responsive to the needs of persons with learning or mental health disabilities;
- facilitating the participation of persons with mobility related disabilities who cannot attend consultations in person through alternate means;
- making every reasonable effort to ensure that LCO organized conferences or similar events are accessible or that provision has been made for accommodation as requested;
- welcoming service animals accompanying persons living with disabilities; in the normal course, there will be no fee for the support person; if it is necessary to impose a fee, it will be announced in advance;
- welcoming support persons accompanying persons living with disabilities;
- offering materials related to consultations meetings in a variety of formats, on request;
- providing ways of contacting the LCO in a variety of formats.

Persons living with disabilities who wish to participate in the LCO's activities should know that the LCO usually holds public activities outside its own offices. Where possible, it ensures that other sites are accessible by visiting them in advance; where this is not possible, it relies on the assurance of the person or organization providing the space where the activity will be conducted that it is accessible and that service animals are welcome.

The LCO does not have assistive devices in its offices and cannot ensure that they will be available on other sites used for its activities.

Whenever possible, the LCO will make reasonable efforts to make activities not explicitly listed in the policy accessible to participants.

5. When it Would be Helpful for the Person with a Disability to Notify the LCO about the Need for Accommodation

In many cases, people living with disabilities will be able to participate in the LCO's activities without advising the LCO that they will require accommodation to do so. For example, the LCO always seeks to ensure that the location of consultations is accessible to persons with mobility related disabilities. Consultation papers and reports are always posted in html and PDF. The LCO has TTY equipment. Persons wishing to visit the LCO's offices can do so knowing that they are accessible.

However, from time to time, it would help the LCO ensure that the activity in which the person wishes to participate is accessible. For example, if in order to participate in a consultation, an individual requires large print background documents or documents in Braille, or a sign language interpreter, the LCO will need to know in order to prepare the documents or arrange for the interpreter. Another example is that support persons are always welcome, but if lunch is provided, it helps to know whether a participant will be accompanied by his or her support person. For events involving food, it is important to know whether an attendee's form of disability requires a particular kind of food. If the individual requires additional breaks, it helps in organizing a consultation to know that is the case.

6. Procedure for Requesting Accommodation

To advise the LCO that a form of accommodation will be necessary for a person with a disability to participate in an LCO's activity, the person or someone on behalf of the person may advise the LCO in writing by letter or email or orally by telephone or in person or in other formats, providing a description of the particular barrier and the accommodation required. Individuals are requested to advise the LCO of accommodation needs as soon as possible. Contact information is below.

The LCO will normally respond initially to requests within three business days. A representative of the LCO will discuss with the person or someone on his or her behalf the form of accommodation required. If necessary, the representative will discuss with the Executive Director the ability of the LCO to provide it and will subsequently advise the individual requesting accommodation as soon as possible whether the LCO will be able to provide the accommodation and if not, will ensure that the individual has an opportunity to discuss other methods of making the relevant participation accessible.

Once a form of accommodation has been agreed upon and provided, it is the responsibility of the person requesting the accommodation to report any problems or concerns with it to the LCO in order to permit appropriate adjustments to be made at the time where possible or in the future. If necessary and possible under the circumstances, the Executive Director will discuss the matter with the individual concerned.

7. Training for Staff

The LCO provides training to its staff and other relevant persons on this policy and its requirements and the most effective and appropriate ways to interact and communicate with persons with various kinds of disabilities, or persons who bring an assistive device or are accompanied by a support person or a service animal when they participate in the LCO's activities.

8. Feedback and Questions about This Policy

The LCO welcomes feedback on this policy and on its efforts to make its activities accessible. Questions and feedback should be communicated in writing by letter or email or orally by telephone or in person or in other formats.

The LCO will normally initially respond to questions and feedback within three business days.

9. Review of Policy

The LCO reviews its policies from time to time and it may make changes to this Use of Information, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

10. Contact Information

Requests for accommodation and feedback and questions about this policy can be communicated to the LCO in person, by telephone or in writing:

Law Commission of Ontario
2032 Ignat Kaneff Building
York University
4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON M3J 1P3

Email: LawCommission@lco-cdo.org

Tel: 416.650.8406
TTY: 1.877.650.8082

Toll Free: 1.866.950.8406
Fax: 416.650.8418