

The Law Society of Manitoba Policy on *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*

Preamble

As the regulatory body of the legal profession in the province, the purpose of The Law Society of Manitoba is to uphold and protect the public interest in the delivery of legal services with competence, integrity and independence.

The Law Society of Manitoba is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to access and to meeting accessibility standards required under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its regulations. The Law Society of Manitoba has created this policy to address the core requirements for private sector and non-profit organizations under the Customer Service Standard Regulation.

Policy

1. Communication and Information:

We communicate with people disabled by barriers in ways that take the nature of the barrier into account. If the barrier to accessibility is unclear, we will ask the individual to identify a preferred method of communication. We will then communicate with the individual using the preferred method of communication, to the best of our abilities.

Our publications and communications can be made available in alternative formats upon request. In the event we are unable to provide a particular alternative format, we will notify you as soon as practicable and work to provide a suitable alternative format.

We will document all information received from individuals disabled by barriers regarding their accessibility needs.

2. Assistive Devices:

People with disabilities are welcome to use any personal assistive device they may require while accessing our services and facilities.

If a situation arises where the assistive device presents significant or unavoidable health and/or safety concerns, we will attempt to take other available measures to ensure the individual can still access our services.

3. Support Persons:

We welcome all individuals who require a support person to attend at our office with them. Generally, this person may remain with the individual at all times. There may be circumstances where it may not be possible or appropriate to have a support person present. In the event a support person cannot accompany the individual, we will do our best to provide alternative accommodation.

4. Service Animals:

We are committed to meeting the requirements of *The Human Rights Code* and acknowledge the right of an individual to be accompanied in public places by a service animal.

We adopt the definition of “service animal” as defined in *The Human Rights Code*. Under the *Code*, a service animal “means an animal that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person’s disability.”

5. Barrier-free Access:

We are committed to maintaining barrier-free access to our facilities and services. We will take steps to ensure that all the features of our organization that are there to enable barrier-free access are available for use as intended.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruption:

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to any of our accessibility features or services that will affect individuals disabled by barriers, we will provide public notice as soon as possible.

This notice will describe:

- The affected accessibility feature
- The reason for disruption
- The anticipated length of time of the disruption
- The name and contact information of a staff member who can provide assistance or field questions if needed
- Alternative modes of access (if available)

Accessibility features that may be affected by a temporary disruption include:

- Elevator
- Accessible washrooms

7. Feedback Process:

The Law Society of Manitoba welcomes feedback from all individuals on our efforts to ensure accessibility for our service users. Such feedback allows us to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. We will conduct a review based on the feedback, determine what can be done to remove identified barriers and develop an appropriate action plan in response.

All actions taken as a result of the feedback will be tracked and documented. This information will be given to the individual who provided the feedback and otherwise will be made available on request.

We will communicate all of our responses to feedback in a manner that meets the communication needs of the individual who is inquiring.

An individual can give feedback in the following ways:

- In person: to one of our staff members or at reception
- Phone
- Email
- On our Website (*form under development)

All feedback should be directed to the Law Society's **Equity Officer and Policy Counsel** (aschacter@lawsociety.mb.ca | The Law Society of Manitoba | 200 – 260 St. Mary Avenue Winnipeg, MB | R3C 0M6 | 204.926.2029) who is responsible for responding to feedback and determining what action should be taken on behalf of The Law Society of Manitoba.

8. Training:

All staff members of The Law Society of Manitoba will receive training in November 2018 on accessible customer service. As part of this training, all staff members will be familiar with our own policies and practice guides. New employees will be trained as soon as reasonably practicable.

Staff will receive ongoing training on accessible customer service in connection with any changes to the Law Society's policies and practices regarding providing barrier-free access.