



## **Accessibility Policy**

The following policy has been established by the Office of the Ombudsman to govern the provision of its services in accordance with Regulation 191/11, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" ("Regulation") under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. These standards are developed to break down barriers and increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of information and communications, employment and transportation.

The Office of the Ombudsman is governed by this policy as well as its Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* in meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

The Office of the Ombudsman endeavors to incorporate accessibility standards in all of its practices.

### **The Office of the Ombudsman's Commitment**

The Office of the Ombudsman has historically striven to provide fully accessible goods, services and facilities for all persons with disabilities. It remains committed to respecting their dignity and independence and will continue to enhance its practices to ensure it meets their accessibility needs in a timely manner, consistent with the specific requirements of the Act and its regulations.

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the timeframes established by the Regulation.

## **Accessibility Plan**

The Office of the Ombudsman will develop, maintain and document an Accessibility Plan outlining the Office's strategy to prevent and remove barriers from its workplace and to meet its requirements under the Regulation.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities at least once every five years, and will be posted on the Office of the Ombudsman's website. Upon request, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide a copy of the Accessibility Plan in an accessible format.

In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman will prepare annual status reports on the progress of measures taken to implement the Office's strategy outlined in its Accessibility Plan, and will post the status reports on its website. Status reports will also be made available in an accessible format upon request.

## **Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to ensure that accessibility criteria and features are incorporated when it procures or acquires goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. Where it is impracticable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide an explanation upon request.

## **Training Employees and Volunteers**

The Office of the Ombudsman will ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and continue to provide training on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities, to:

- all its employees and volunteers;
- all persons who participate in developing the Office of the Ombudsman's policies; and,
- all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman.

The training will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons. Staff will be trained when changes are made to the accessibility policy. New staff will be trained upon commencement of employment. The Office of the Ombudsman will keep a record of the training it provides.

## **Information and Communication Standards**

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Upon request, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide or will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability.

The Office of the Ombudsman will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

The Office of the Ombudsman will also notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### **Accessible Websites and Web Content**

The Office of the Ombudsman will ensure that its Internet and Intranet websites, including web content, conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA except where this is impracticable.

## **Employment Standards**

### **Recruitment**

The Office of the Ombudsman will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.

### **Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process**

The Office of the Ombudsman will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate further in an assessment or selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.

If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Office of the Ombudsman will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

### Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, the Office of the Ombudsman will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### Informing Employees of Supports

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to inform its employees of its policies (and any updates to those policies) used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after commencing employment.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

Upon the request of an employee with a disability, the Office of the Ombudsman will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed to perform his/her job and information that is generally available to other employees.

In determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support, the Office of the Ombudsman will consult with the employee making the request.

## **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

The Office of the Ombudsman will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and if the Office of the Ombudsman is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability. The Office of the Ombudsman will provide this information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

Where the employee requires assistance, the Office of the Ombudsman will, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the Office of the Ombudsman to provide assistance to the employee.

The Office of the Ombudsman will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed, and, when the Office of the Ombudsman reviews its general emergency response policies.

## **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to maintain a written process, through its Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Disabilities, for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. If requested, information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided will also be included in individual accommodation plans. In addition, the plans will include individualized workplace emergency response information (where required), and will identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

## **Return to Work Process**

The Office of the Ombudsman will maintain a documented return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

The return to work process will outline the steps Office of the Ombudsman will take to facilitate the return to work and will use documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process.

This return to work process will not replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute (i.e., the *Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997*).

## **Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement & Redeployment**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development and advancement to employees, or when redeploying employees.

## **Feedback**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to ensure that its process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports upon request.

The Office of the Ombudsman will also notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports with respect to the feedback process.