

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020-2025)

Introduction

Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Law Society of Ontario is committed to ensuring equal access for people with disabilities and treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence and embodies the principles of integration and equal opportunity.

The Law Society is committed to being a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities in employment, in its communications and information, in the delivery of goods and services and in its built environment. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (the “Act”) and associated regulations, including O. Reg. 191/11: *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (the “Regulation”) and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The Law Society is committed to ensuring that all its employees are aware of their responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons with disabilities.

Background

The Law Society is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and O. Reg. 191/11: *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*.

The Law Society’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the Law Society will ensure we meet these requirements and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces

The Multi-Year Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Section One: Ongoing Initiatives to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The Law Society has made significant progress to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in the areas of Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, and establishing a Feedback Process.

Customer Service

The Law Society is committed to maintaining an accessible environment for persons with disabilities in the delivery of its goods and services and will continue to:

- Communicate in ways that take into account the needs of the persons with disabilities;
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and, upon request, the Law Society will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities.
- Ensure persons with disabilities who use assistive devices are able to obtain, use or benefit from

our services.

- Allow a person with disabilities who is accompanied by a service animal or support person to enter the premises with the animal or support person.
- Provide notification in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.
- Provide information about emergency procedures, plans or public safety in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request.

Information and Communications

The Law Society is committed to providing accessible information and will continue to:

- Upon request and in consultation with the person making the request, arrange for the provision of documents in an accessible format or with communication support to persons with a disability in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Ensure the Law Society's public websites and web content conforms with the required standards.

Employment

The Law Society is committed to supporting the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities and will continue to:

- Notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
- Notify job applicants that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used during the recruitment process.
- Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Inform its employees of its policies that support employees with disabilities.
- Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Law Society is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- Accommodate the needs of its employees with disabilities as required by the Ontario accessibility laws and Ontario Human Rights Code by developing individualized accommodation plans for its employees with disabilities as the Law Society is made aware.
- Maintain a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations and support in order to return to work.
- Consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as their individual accommodation plans when conducting performance management reviews, providing career development and advancement to employees, and when redeploying employees.

Feedback Process

The Law Society is committed to meeting accessibility requirements and continuously taking steps to improve its services and website to comply with the AODA and its regulations. The Law Society will continue to welcome feedback regarding the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities. Feedback can be provided to the Executive Director, Client & People Services:

- in person at the Law Society of Ontario, Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N6;
- by telephone, 416-947-7622 or 1-800-668-7380 ext. 7622;
- in writing to the Executive Director, Client & People Services or the CEO; or
- by email to aoda@lso.ca.

Training for Staff

The Law Society is committed to training its employees and other individuals who provide services to the public on the Law Society's behalf on accessible customer service and communications. Training will continue to occur within 6 months of employees' commencement of their duties and records will be maintained

The Law Society provides training on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the Law Society's policies, practices and practices.

Section Two: Planned Strategies and Actions***Customer Service***

The Law Society will continue to strive to provide services that are accessible to and inclusive of employees, licensees and members of the public with disabilities by:

- Evaluating existing programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of persons with disabilities.
- Continuing to embed the focus on accessibility in the development of any new programs or services.

Employment

The Law Society will continue to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities by:

- Identifying and working to remove any existing barriers for persons with disabilities;
- Developing a revised employment strategy for equity-seeking groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Developing an equity analysis into all recruitment processes to remove any unintended accessibility barriers.
- Fostering a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through an Employee Engagement Survey.

Information and Communications

The Law Society will continue to ensure digital accessibility in all services and information provided to licensees and members of the public, and the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by:

- Ensuring all its public websites and web content conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021, except where this is not practical or there is an exception by law;
- Conducting regular reviews of compliance and best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility;
- Continuing to evaluate and remediate website content and ensure it meets or exceed accessibility compliance requirements.

Feedback Process

The Law Society will continue to accept feedback on its accessibility practices by developing a revised process for receiving and responding to feedback using an online form to filter inquiries and issues. Feedback will continue to be accepted in-person, by phone, and in writing.

Design of Public Spaces

The Law Society recognizes the need to increase the accessibility of its public spaces where possible. To ensure accessibility in public spaces, the Law Society will:

- Continue to implement accessibility improvements when renovating or modifying existing interior and/or exterior public spaces;
- Ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated when setting up temporary event spaces, such as event seating and table layouts, check-in counters, queuing lines or waiting areas;
- Conduct a public space accessibility audit to ensure public spaces meet accessibility guidelines and standard and identify areas for improvement.

Conclusion

The Law Society is committed to the prevention, identification and removal of accessibility barriers. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be monitored on an annual basis and status updates will be posted on the Law Society's website. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be updated in 2025.

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact the Executive Director, Client & People Services at 416-947-7622 or 1-800-668-7380 ext. 7622 or aoda@lso.ca.



Signature – Diana Miles, CEO

December 17, 2020

Date