



Policy

Type:	General		
Name:	Accessibility Policy		
Status:	Version #: 1		
Date Approved:	September 22, 2015	Date Revised:	

Background

AOLS strives to provide its services, at all times, in a way which respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. AOLS is committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services, and allow them to benefit from the same services, as other customers or stakeholders.

As a small organization which encounters those with disabilities infrequently and must operate with limited resources and various legal requirements, AOLS will accommodate most effectively, the needs of persons with disabilities by approaching each instance as it arises, consulting the individual with a disability on how best to accommodate their needs.

Application This policy applies to all staff who work in the AOLS office or otherwise on AOLS's behalf.

Definitions The definition of disability is defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ("handicap")

Responsibilities	The Executive Director shall ensure that all contract staff follow this policy and shall resolve any issues not readily handled otherwise.
Communication	AOLS staff will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This will include communication either in written form, in person, by telephone or by email. We will ask them how we could best accommodate their needs.
Assistance	AOLS staff will welcome assistive devices, service animals and/or support persons. We will not touch, move, limit the use of a device or direct our communication to the assisting animal or person, except at the decision of the customer/stakeholder.
Facilities	In the event that a person is unable to access AOLS facilities due to a disability, AOLS will arrange an agreeable local alternate location. AOLS's current office is on the second floor of a building with no elevator. This fact is being posted on our website. We can arrange to meeting nearby.
Notice of Temporary Disruption	In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services, relevant to customers or stakeholders with disabilities, a notice will be posted, which will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and how to arrange alternative facilities or services.
Training for Staff	AOLS is providing training to all contract employees who deal with customers/stakeholders on AOLS's behalf. This training will be provided for new and existing contract employees in a reasonable time frame (not to exceed 6 months). Training includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of this policy. • How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. • How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person. • What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing AOLS's services.
Feedback Process	AOLS is committed to meeting or surpassing customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on how well those expectations have been met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way AOLS provides its services to people with disabilities can be conveyed either verbally, by email or in writing. All comments will be directed to the Executive Director. Customers can expect a reply within 4 weeks.