

## **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Customer Service Policy**

### **1. Statement of policy**

Daniel & Partners LLP (the “Firm”) is committed to providing its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The Firm is also committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access its goods and services and to benefit from those services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients.

The Firm will provide exceptional customer service to all of its clients, third parties and members of the public.

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that:

- a) Persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the Firm’s goods and services;
- b) Goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- c) Goods and services provided to persons with disabilities are integrated with the provision of goods and services to other clients, third parties and members of the public, unless an alternative measure is necessary to allow a person with a disability to benefit. The alternative measure may be temporary or permanent;
- d) Communications with persons with disabilities are conducted in a manner that take into account the person’s disability; and
- e) Persons with disabilities may use such assistive devices, service animals and support persons as are necessary to access the Firm’s goods and services, unless superseded by other legislation.

### **2. Purpose**

This policy and its procedures address the accessibility requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

### 3. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all employees (as defined in section 4, below) of the Firm. This policy applies not only during working time, but to any activities which could reasonably be associated with the Firm (e.g. social events).

### 4. Definitions

- a) “**assistive devices**” are auxiliary aids, such as communications aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).
- b) “**disability**”, as per the Ontario Human Rights Code, means:
  - 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*.
- c) For the purposes of this policy, “**employees**” means every person who deals with clients, third parties or members of the public on behalf of the Firm, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, intern, volunteer or otherwise.
- d) “**persons with disabilities**” are individuals who have a disability.

- e) “**support person**” is an individual, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability, in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, while accessing goods or services.
- f) “**service animal**” is an animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

## **5. Providing goods and services to persons with disabilities**

The Firm is committed to excellence in serving all of its clients, including persons with disabilities. In particular:

### a) Communication

The Firm will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

The Firm will train employees who communicate with its clients as to how to most effectively interact and communicate with persons with disabilities.

### b) Telephone services

The Firm is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to its clients. The Firm will train employees to communicate with its clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

The Firm will offer to communicate with its clients by e-mail, fax or letter, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or not available.

### c) Assistive devices

The Firm is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from its goods and services. The Firm will ensure that its employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities while accessing its goods or services.

#### d) Billing

The Firm is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of its clients. For this reason, invoices will be provided in hard copy, large print and/or e-mail, upon request.

The Firm will answer any questions that its clients may have about their invoices in person, by telephone or by e-mail.

### **6. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

The Firm is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of its premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The Firm will also ensure that all employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

The Firm is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the Firm's premises with their support person. At no time will persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on the Firm's premises.

Permission will be obtained from persons with disabilities prior to discussions of a confidential nature taking place with the support person present.

### **7. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

The Firm will provide its clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and reception counters on the Firm's premises.

### **8. Training for Employees**

The Firm will provide training to all of its employees, volunteers and others who regularly deal with the public or other third parties on the Firm's behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- a) The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- b) How to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities;
- c) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- d) How to offer assistance if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Firm's goods and services; and
- e) Review of the Firm's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Employees will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way that goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities.

Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to such policies, practices and procedures.

## **9. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of the Firm is to meet or surpass its clients' expectations while serving persons with disabilities. Comments relating to how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way that the Firm provides goods and services to persons with disabilities can be made verbally, in person or by telephone, or in writing, by requesting a copy of the Firm's client feedback form. All feedback will be directed to the managing partner of the Firm. Clients can expect to hear back in within seven business days.

Complaints will be addressed according to the complaint management procedures of the Firm.

## **10. Modifications to Policy**

The Firm is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

Any policy of the Firm that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## **11. Questions about This Policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to persons with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by the Firm.