

# WEIRFOULDS CLIENT ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy guides WeirFoulds LLP in making all of its programs and services accessible to Ontarians with disabilities. WeirFoulds is committed to exceeding its obligations set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the first of four such standards designed to make all Ontario workplaces fully accessible to Ontarians with disabilities by 2025.

## EVERYONE APPLIES

All employees, lawyers, and third-party individuals and entities that provide services on WeirFoulds' behalf ("Service Providers") follow the policy and procedures in this document.

## DEFINITIONS

"*Assistive Device*" is an auxiliary aid, technology, or other mechanism that helps a person with a disability to perform tasks related to communication, mobility, or other tasks (e.g., walkers, wheelchairs, magnifiers for reading, hearing aids).

"*Disability*" is defined by the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as:

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or in 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*.

"*Person(s) with Disability*" shall mean those people who have a disability.

"*Service Animals*" mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

"Support Persons" mean any other person 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 or with access to services.

## **PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

WeirFoulds commits that its policy and procedures meet or exceed the duties and responsibilities required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 through the practices outlined in this policy. We invite you to notify us (*contact details mentioned below*), if you require and accommodation for your next visit to the Firm or any of our client events. We will work with you to determine how to meet your needs.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS**

WeirFoulds welcomes the service animals of people with disabilities, unless the animal is specifically excluded by law. In such rare cases that a service animal is excluded, the onus falls on WeirFoulds to provide other appropriate measures for the client's comfort.

We also welcome support persons who accompany any person with a disability. Where confidentiality is important because of the nature of the discussion, WeirFoulds will obtain the consent of the client and may require the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement.

## **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

WeirFoulds will ensure that its Service Providers are trained and familiar with assistive devices, and will make all reasonable efforts to facilitate the use of assistive devices for persons with disabilities. Service Providers will not operate or otherwise interfere with a person's personal assistive device unless invited to do so by the person or her/his support person.

## **NOTICE OF TEMPORARY SERVICE DISRUPTION**

Temporary disruptions affecting WeirFoulds' provision of services will be communicated by notices giving the reason for the disruption, the expected duration (if known), and will describe alternatives. Notices will be posted in prominent locations, such as public entrances, information and reception desks, on the website and any other reasonable location that suits the circumstances (such as on the entrance to the parking lot or door of the elevator or washroom).

Service or program closures or shortened hours caused by severe weather, disease outbreak and mechanical difficulties (e.g. a power outage) will be posted on the firm's website and communicated by a general voice message at WeirFoulds' business phone number.

Emergency Service Providers are familiar with emergency procedures and will provide the best and most appropriate assistance to clients or staff with disabilities who may need assistance during an emergency.

## **SERVICE PROVIDER TRAINING**

WeirFoulds provides AODA training to all Service Providers after their hiring or engagement. Training is provided on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Policy and/or to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

We use training materials offered through HR Downloads online training, and the Talent and HR Department, maintains access to employees' training records through this site. From time to time, the training may be revised to ensure it remains current.

All WeirFoulds Service Providers engaged prior to December 31, 2011 received training on the Policy, and completed the test prior to the end of the calendar year 2011. WeirFoulds Service Providers hired (or otherwise retained) after January 1, 2012 will receive training on the Policy as soon as it can be reasonably accomplished. The Talent and HR Department maintains all relevant training records.

This training includes, but is not limited to:

- Why the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 was implemented;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Act;
- How WeirFoulds' Accessibility Policy directs the provision of services to persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with a range of disabilities;
- How to handle situations where a person with a disability has difficulty accessing WeirFoulds' services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, or require assistance from a support person or service animal; and
- The equipment or devices available on WeirFoulds' premises that may help serve persons with disabilities.

## **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

We are committed to providing accessible documentation to all of our clients. For this reason, letters, invoices, or any other documentation may be provided in alternate formats upon request, for example, large print hard copy, e-mail, etc. We will strive to answer any questions our clients may have about the content of the relevant documentation in person, by telephone or email, or any other method that may be reasonably accommodated.

## FEEDBACK

Our primary goal is to deliver services to our clients in a respectful, welcoming, and supportive manner, and we feel that the best way to be sure we are doing so is to invite your feedback regarding our service.

Please feel free to fill out an [Accessibility Feedback Form](#). We invite you to direct any questions, concerns, or compliments about our policy to contact WeirFoulds' Human Resources Manager:

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Toronto, ON Canada M5K 1B7

Tel: 647-715-3502 | Fax: 416-365-1876  
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Our Human Resources Manager is pleased to respond to your feedback, and is committed to provide a written response, together with any findings about your inquiry, within fourteen (14) business days of receiving your correspondence.

Updated: September 1, 2021