



Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Objective

The objective of this policy is to make sure that all people using the services of Hamilton Community Legal Clinic/Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton (the “Clinic”) have equal access to the legal services provided by the Clinic. All Employees (herein to be noted as “Staff”) of the Clinic will make every effort to provide services that accommodate a variety of physical, mental, linguistic and cultural needs, while respecting the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, equality of opportunity and full social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Accommodation:

All requests for accommodation will be met unless it creates extreme costs or health and safety risks (defined as “undue hardship” under Ontario’s *Human Rights Code*). “Accommodation” means making sure people receive the full benefit of our services by providing the service in a way that makes sense, depending on one’s physical, mental, emotional and linguistic needs. We strive to make sure that our service is as “barrier-free” as possible.

Examples of Accommodation:

We will provide accommodation needed, such as:

- An interpreter (including ASL sign language interpreters),
- Making sure the physical space is wheelchair accessible,
- Making sure appointments are flexible for time of the day and length of time required to discuss one’s legal issue,
- Understanding ongoing requirements of accessible transportation,
- Recognition of one’s religious needs.

All persons using the Clinic’s services will be free to use their own assistive devices (such as walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters) and service animals (such as guide dogs). We also welcome the use of one’s alphabet boards, bliss symbol boards or other communication devices.

Notice if our Service Is Not Available

The Clinic acknowledges the difficulties one may have with accessible transportation and other accommodation needs. Clients are urged to call the Clinic to ensure that it is not closed for service.

If an interview has been scheduled on a person's religious holiday, we will reschedule it.

People attending at the Clinic with a support person need not tell us why they require the services of that support person.

The Clinic will attempt to provide a format that works for people who have limited vision if they come to the Clinic by providing documents in large print or on CD.

The Clinic is sensitive to the fact that one's disability may make it very difficult to be in a closed room. We urge people to advise us if they would like a larger room or if they prefer a room with the door open.

We will provide a safe and appropriate environment for children and infants.

If a person's disability makes it difficult for them to understand speech, we urge them to:

- Bring a support person with them,
- Ask the person speaking to them to speak slowly and clearly, and
- Ask the Staff person or the support person to write down some key points to take with them.

Telling the Clinic about Their Disability or Their Need for Accommodation

Each person's needs for accommodation are individual. When requesting accommodation, people do not have to give details about their disability or another need for accommodation, for example, religion. The Clinic just needs to know that there is a need for accommodation and how that need may be accommodated.

The Clinic does need to understand how a person's disability relates to their legal problem and what they need by way of accommodation.

Off Site Meetings

Requests for meetings outside of the Clinic's office will be considered if it is required to meet an accommodation need.

Scent-free Policy

The Clinic has a scent-free policy and requests that people do not wear perfume or after-shave or use scented products if they are meeting with Staff in person or if they are attending an event at the Clinic, unless the scent is related to a prescribed treatment.

Asking for Accommodation

If a person wants to arrange for accommodation in advance of their conversation with a member of the Staff, they should contact the Clinic in the following ways:

Telephone: 905-527-4572
Relay Service: 1-800-855-0511
Mail: 100 Main Street East, Suite 203, Hamilton, ON L8N 3W4
Fax: 905-523-7282

A person can also speak privately with the Staff person who is helping them with their legal problem.

Staff Training

The Clinic's Staff will receive ongoing training on access, accommodation for disability and a wide range of issues to try to ensure that Staff has a broad knowledge of disability issues, as well as accommodation pursuant to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Periodic Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed within one year and every two years thereafter. We welcome your suggestions to improve this policy. Please send those suggestions to the Clinic's Executive Director at 905-527-4572, ext 45, by email at tyeh@lao.on.ca or by mail at:

Hamilton Community Legal Clinic/
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton
Landmark Place
100 Main Street East, Suite 203
Hamilton, ON L8N 3W4

Feedback and Evaluation

Clients of the Clinic who have requested access and/or accommodation services may be asked to fill out an "Accessibility Client Satisfaction Survey". The Clinic will take all suggestions seriously and work hard to better accommodate your needs in the future.

This Policy was established: January 1, 2012