

CLIENT SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT AND ACCESSIBLE CLIENT SERVICE PLAN

Providing Services to People with Disabilities

OUR COMMITMENT

Giffen LLP is committed to excellence in serving all clients, including people with disabilities. We will strive to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We will endeavour to provide to people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients.

PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Giffen LLP will carry out our responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that account for their disability. Information regarding our services will be provided on our website, www.giffenlawyers.com; by telephone or via email. Upon request, written communications will be provided in hard copy, large print or by email. We will answer any questions clients may have about the content of any written communications by telephone, in person or via email.

Staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

We are committed to providing accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with clients by telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

If telephone communication is not suitable to clients' communication needs or is not available, we will offer to communicate with clients by email.

Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services.

We will also ensure that staff advise clients of the following assistive devices available on our premises for clients:

Underground parking at elevator level
Accessible washrooms on main floor of building
Street level ramp at corner of Queen and Weber Sts.
Accessible, automatic front doors

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

People with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed within the public areas of our premises. We will also ensure that staff are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Giffen LLP's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be denied access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Staff Training

Giffen LLP will provide training to all employees who deal with the public. Training will be provided within one month upon the hiring of new staff.

Training will include:

1. An overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the client service standard;
2. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
3. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
4. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Giffen LLP's services;
5. Giffen LLP policies, practices and procedures relating to the client service standard.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Temporary Disruptions

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities such as underground parking, accessible washrooms or elevators, Giffen LLP will notify clients promptly by posting a notice or advising clients in advance of a scheduled meeting, by telephone or email. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time and a description of alternative facilities, if available.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Giffen LLP is to meet and surpass client expectations while serving clients with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

All feedback, including complaints, regarding the way Giffen LLP provides services to people with disabilities can be made by email to privacyofficer@giffenlawyers.com; info@giffenlawyers.com, verbally to lawyers or staff or in writing. All feedback will be directed to Giffen LLP's privacy officer. Clients can expect to receive a response within one week.

Modifications to Policies

We are committed to developing client service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy without considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of Giffen LLP that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or replaced.

Questions about this Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to clients with disabilities. If anyone has any questions about the policy kindly direct those inquiries to Cindy Dickinson at 519-578-4150, Ext. 143 or cld@giffenlawyers.com.