

# Accessibility & Accommodation Policy

## AUM Law

### Purpose & Statement of Commitment

The accessibility programs and procedures outlined in this policy are designed to ensure that the Firm is accessible to all employees, customers and visitors and respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

For employees of the Firm, AUM Law is committed to creating and maintaining an equitable and integrated environment whereby every employee receives equal opportunity with respect to employment and receives accommodation where required, in accordance with the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “AODA”) and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (191/11)* (the “IASR”).

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees, temporary workers, business partners, and contractors of AUM Law.

### Definitions

**Accessible formats** – formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats include large print, Braille, and audio electronic formats such as DVDs, CDs, etc.

**Communications** – as it is used in the Information and Communication Standard refers to the interaction between two or more people or entities when information is provided, sent or received.

**Communication Supports** – methods to assist communication for people with disabilities who may need to access information. Some examples include plain language formats, sign language, as well as reading out loud, captioning or using written notes to communicate.

**Information** – knowledge, data and facts that convey meaning and that exist in any format such as text, audio, digital or images.

**Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Information** – refers to the information prepared by employers, in consultation with their employees who have disabilities, to help them prepare for emergencies such as fire, severe weather and power outages.

**People with Disabilities** – those individuals who have a disability.

**Disability** – as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code is:

- 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 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.

**Undue Hardship** – is determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors that constitute or may contribute to undue hardship include: insupportable costs, substantial disruptions of operations, and health and safety consideration. If any of these factors create a burden that cannot be reasonably borne by the Firm, the obligation to accommodate ceases.

## **Policy**

AUM Law is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible environment for all employees, customers and visitors, and will provide accommodation where required to remove barriers to accessibility, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the “Act”), the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, 191/11.

To achieve this goal, AUM Law will carry out its functions and responsibilities in accordance with the applicable legislation and will make every effort possible to ensure all accessibility programs, will be kept up-to-date and will reflect the most recent changes in legislation.

## **Training**

All AUM Law employees, volunteers and others who conduct business on behalf of AUM Law are required to complete training on The Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, IASR and Customer Service training. This training will be provided to new employees during orientation, or as soon as can be arranged. Training will cover areas related to: the purpose and requirements of the AODA, how to communicate and interact with people with disabilities, how to interact with service animals or support persons, how to identify assistive devices, how to properly respond to people using assistive devices, what to do if a person has difficulty accessing AUM Law services or facilities, and AUM Law’s policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

All employees will receive training on any changes to the prescribed policies and procedures, as soon as is practicable. A detailed record of training completed shall also be maintained.

## **Accessible Customer Service and the Customer Service Standard**

AUM Law is committed to providing all customers and visitors access to its facilities and delivering accessible customer service in a manner that respects their dignity and independence.

AUM Law is further committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access its goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other customers. Customers and Visitors of AUM Law who require accommodation when accessing AUM Law’s services or facilities will be provided with the appropriate accommodations in accordance with the *AODA Customer Service Standard Regulation (429/07)*.

## **Use of Assistive Devices, Service Animals, and Support Persons**

AUM Law is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require a service animal, or support person to be able to obtain, use or benefit from AUM Law's goods and services.

Service animals are welcome on all parts of AUM Law premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

There are no fees to have a support person attend the facility and individuals accompanied by support persons shall not be denied access to the support person while on AUM Law premises.

## **Information and Communication**

AUM Law is committed to communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Information pertaining to AUM Law, its goods, services, facilities and feedback processes will be provided in accessible formats, upon request, at no additional cost.

Upon receiving a request for information in an alternate format, the Firm will consult with the person making the request to determine the most appropriate accessible format or communication support, given the needs of the person and AUM Law's capability to deliver.

In the event that AUM Law is unable to convert the information or communications into an accessible format, AUM Law will explain why it is unable to do so and will provide a summary of the content, in accordance with the IASR.

### Billing

AUM Law is committed to providing accessible notices or invoices to all customers. For this reason, statements or invoices will be provided in alternative formats upon request (e.g., printed copies, large print, email).

### Notice of Temporary Disruption

AUM Law will make reasonable efforts to provide customers with notice in the event of a disruption in the facilities or services usually used by all customers, including persons with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Notices will be placed at all public entrances on AUM Law premises. In the event of an emergency, it may not be possible for AUM Law to give adequate notice.

### Emergency Response Procedures Communicated to the Public

In the event that AUM Law makes emergency procedures, plans and public safety information available to the public, the information will be provided in an accessible format upon request.

## **Accessible Employment Practices and the Employment Standard**

### **Recruitment & Selection**

AUM Law will notify its employees and candidates about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Candidates selected to participate in the selection process will also be notified that accommodations are available upon request relating to the materials or processes to be used.

Accommodation will be provided to all candidates at every stage of the recruitment process, upon request.

Candidates requiring accommodation are encouraged to make their needs known to the recruiter and/or accessibility coordinator so that the appropriate accommodations may be provided in consultation with the applicant.

Candidates that have been offered a position with AUM Law will be notified of AUM Law's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### **Individual Accommodation Plans and Requesting Accommodations**

AUM Law will maintain a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. If requested, information regarding accessible formats, communication supports, and individualized workplace emergency response information (where required), and/or other accommodations provided will be included in the individual accommodation plan.

It is to be understood that the onus for initiating accommodation requests is with the employee who requires the accommodation.

Individuals who require accommodation for a disability must complete and submit a Request for Accommodation form to the Human Resources department. The Request for Accommodation form may be obtained from the Human Resources department. In order to ensure the appropriate accommodations are provided, medical information concerning how best to accommodate the employee in their position and the length of time the accommodation is needed for, may be required and will be kept confidential.

It is the employee's responsibility to cooperate with the Firm during the accommodation process and ensure that the Firm has the appropriate information to accommodate his or her needs. Employees requesting accommodation are also expected to be reasonable in responding to the proposals put forward by the Firm and provide updates on any changes in their condition or accommodation requirements as needed and/or requested.

If an employee is absent from work due to disability for an extended period and requires accommodation in order to return to work, AUM Law will develop an individual accommodation plan for that individual, in consultation with disability benefits providers, where suitable and necessary.

All individual accommodation plans will be reviewed on an annual basis at the latest. Depending on the individual's circumstances and the required accommodations, more frequent

review may be required. The Firm reserves the right to seek advice of a specialist, with the employee's consent, where the request for accommodation involves issues outside the expertise of the Firm.

The Firm will make every reasonable effort possible to accommodate disability-related requests for accommodations up to the point of undue hardship. Requests for accommodation may also be denied if the employee requesting accommodation refuses or fails to provide the necessary information required to develop the accommodation plan. Should an accommodation request be denied or an alternative offered by the Firm be refused, the employee requesting the accommodation will be informed of the reasons for the decision and their right to request a review of the decision.

The employee may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Human Resources department.

### **Performance Management**

Individual accommodation plans and/or the accessibility needs of an employee will be reviewed and considered when managing employee performance.

The individual accommodation plan and the individual's accessibility needs shall also be reviewed prior to a performance management session to ensure all relevant accommodations are implemented in the session and taken into account in the assessment and discussion.

### **Professional, Career Development, Advancement, and Redeployment**

Individual accommodation plans or accessibility needs shall be reviewed and considered to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to training, professional and career development and advancement within the Firm that meets their unique needs and requirements.

In the event that AUM Law chooses to use redeployment as an alternative to layoffs, when a particular job or department has been eliminated, AUM Law will take into account the accessibility needs and skills of its employees with disabilities to determine if alternative work within the organization is available and can be offered.

### **Return to Work Process**

AUM Law maintains a documented return to work policy for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodation to return to work.

The return to work policy outlines the steps AUM Law will take to facilitate the return to work and will include documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process.

### **Emergency Response Procedures**

In the event that AUM Law makes emergency procedures, plans and public safety information available to the public, it will be provided, upon request, in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports.

AUM Law provides employees with disabilities individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee's disability is such that the individualized information is

necessary and that AUM Law is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance, AUM Law shall, with the employee's consent:

- Provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated to provide assistance.
- Provide the information required under this section as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the individual's disability.
- Review the individualized workplace emergency response information, when the employee moves to a different location in the organization; when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and when that AUM Law reviews its general emergency response policies.

### **Feedback and Questions Concerning This Policy**

AUM Law values feedback on its accessibility and accommodation processes and the manner in which it provides service to individuals with disabilities. For any questions concerning this policy and to assist AUM Law in improving its policies and procedures concerning accessibility and accommodation, questions and/or feedback may be directed to the accessibility coordinator in person, via telephone, fax, e-mail or in writing to:

#### **Accessibility Coordinator (Human Resources)**

AUM Law

303 South Tower, 175 Bloor St E, Toronto, ON M4W 3R8

T. (416) 966-2004

E. [HR@Aumlaw.com](mailto:HR@Aumlaw.com)

The Accessibility Coordinator will respond within seven (7) business days either in writing, in person, by e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of feedback and will set out the action to be taken in response to any concerns. The Accessibility Coordinator will work with the appropriate departments and/or individuals to provide information in accessible formats, upon request.

### **Reporting**

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, AUM Law will report accessibility achievements every 3 years, beginning in 2017.

### **Modifications to this Policy**

AUM Law is committed to developing accessibility and accommodation policies for its customers, business partners, and employees in a manner that respects and promotes the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes shall be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

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