



## OIPC Disability Accommodation Policy

### Overview

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (“OIPC”) respects the dignity of all individuals and strives to provide an inclusive, barrier-free environment to all individuals.

### Scope

This policy applies to all individuals with matters before the OIPC (such as complainants, applicants and third parties), including callers or visitors to OIPC premises.

### Policy Statement

The OIPC will treat all individuals with courtesy, and in the course of providing its services to the public, the OIPC will respect the dignity and independence of all individuals.

The OIPC is committed to providing equal access to its services, regardless of mental or physical disability.

Upon a request for accommodation of a mental or physical disability, the OIPC will provide reasonable accommodation to that individual to ensure the individual has equal access to the services provided by the OIPC.

### Responsibilities

Requests for accommodation will be treated on a case by case basis as different disabilities will require different methods of accommodation. Given the limited resources of the OIPC, it may not be possible to provide an individual with “perfect” accommodation, but the OIPC will work with an individual to determine reasonable accommodation.

The responsibilities set out below are intended to assist both individuals and the OIPC in determining reasonable accommodation.

#### Individuals:

- Notify the OIPC of your request for accommodation as soon as possible. Although an accommodation request does not have to be made in writing, it should be communicated to the OIPC as clearly and specifically as possible.

- Assist the OIPC by identifying possible accommodation options and providing additional information if requested. The OIPC will generally accept the information an individual chooses to disclose about his or her disability, but in some exceptional cases the OIPC may request additional information about the disability in order to determine how to reasonably accommodate the individual.
- Accept a reasonable offer of accommodation, even if it is not the preferred accommodation option.

### OIPC

- Upon notification of a disability and request for accommodation, the OIPC will deal with the request in a timely and sensitive manner.
- The OIPC will consult with the individual to identify accommodation options and will consider options identified by the individual.
- The OIPC will inform an individual requesting accommodation what (if any) additional information the OIPC requires to determine reasonable accommodation for the individual.
- The OIPC will notify an individual how the disability will be accommodated.
- If an accommodation request is denied, the OIPC will provide reasons.

### Examples

Some examples of disabilities and potential accommodations are outlined below:

- 1) If an individual requests a document in Braille, the OIPC will provide the option of having someone read the document, providing an audio version, and if reasonable, creating a Braille version of the document as soon as practicable.
- 2) If an individual is accompanied by a support person (companion, caregiver, family member etc.), the OIPC will ensure that the individual has access to the support person. The OIPC will ask the individual if the support person is to be included, and the individual's choice will be respected. The OIPC will provide services directly to the individual with the disability, and not through the support person, unless the individual consents to have the support person represent the individual.
- 3) If an individual has a mental disability, the OIPC will work with the individual or the individual's authorized representative to determine reasonable accommodation,

which may include different modes of communication, and granting additional time to meet deadlines where possible.

- 4) If an individual is unable to stand, the OIPC will provide a chair.
- 5) Guide dogs and service animals will be welcomed without requiring additional evidence that they are necessary.
- 6) Regardless of disability, the OIPC is unable to assist an individual in filling out required forms at this time. However, the OIPC will work with an individual requiring assistance with forms by identifying third parties who may be able to assist with forms.

## Definitions

The following terms are intended to be consistent with those in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and where there is any discrepancy between these terms and the *Human Rights Act*, the *Human Rights Act* will prevail.

- “accommodation” means taking steps to eliminate the different and negative treatment of an individual based on a mental or physical disability.
- “mental disability” means any mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder, regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.
- “physical disability” 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 epilepsy, paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, and physical reliance on a guide dog, service dog, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

## Questions

For more information about the OIPC’s Disability Accommodation Policy, contact the Assistant Commissioner.

## References

- *Alberta Human Rights Act*

## Effective Date

This policy is effective as of February 3, 2014.

**Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed and updated on an *ad hoc* basis as required.

**Approval**

Policy approved by: [Original signed by Jill Clayton, Information and Privacy Commissioner]

Date: February 3, 2014