

Accessibility Policy

Policy #: 017

Created: April 2022

Amended: May 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) remains in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its associated Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). This policy aims to create an accessible environment for all stakeholders, including, employees, consumers, licensees, board members, suppliers, prospective employees and visitors, by identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by people with disabilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities of the BAO, including meetings, communications, governance processes, service provision, and the development of policies and practices. It is applicable to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and other representatives acting on behalf of the BAO.

3. Definitions

- **Accessibility:** The degree to which products, services, environments, or facilities are made usable by people of all abilities.
- **Assistive Device:** Any device designed, made, or adapted to assist a person with a disability in performing a particular task, including physical or technological aids, such as communication devices, canes, crutches, hearing aids, and wheelchairs.
- **Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes physical, architectural, informational, communication, attitudinal, technological, and systemic barriers.
- **Disability:** As defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code, disability includes physical, mental, developmental, or learning disabilities, mental disorders, injuries or disabilities, and any degree of disability, including visible or non-visible disabilities.
- **Service Animal:** An animal used by a person for reasons relating to their disability, where it is apparent or supported by appropriate documentation.
- **Support Person:** An individual who accompanies a person with a disability to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, or facilities.
- **Accessible Formats:** May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

- **Communication Supports:** May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

4. Core Principles

The BAO strives to adhere to the following principles in promoting accessibility:

- **Dignity:** Ensure all individuals are treated with respect and valued equally, regardless of disability.
- **Independence:** Provide support and accommodations to enable people with disabilities to act independently whenever possible.
- **Integration:** Ensure services and communications are provided in an integrated manner that promotes full participation.
- **Equality of Opportunity:** Provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities to access and benefit from the BAO's services and activities.

5. Accessibility Standards Compliance

The BAO is committed to complying with the following accessibility standards as established under the IASR:

- **Customer Service Standard:** Ensuring the provision of services to persons with disabilities is delivered with dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.
- **Information and Communications Standard:** Ensuring accessible formats and communication supports are provided upon request, in a timely manner, and at no additional cost. This includes ensuring that feedback processes and emergency information are accessible.
- **Employment Standard:** Ensuring accommodation is provided to employees, contractors, or volunteers with disabilities during recruitment, assessment, selection processes, and throughout their participation in the BAO. Ensuring that individualized accommodation plans, and return-to-work processes are in place for employees with disabilities.
- **Design of Public Spaces Standard:** Ensuring accessibility considerations are integrated into any future construction or redevelopment of spaces where the BAO conducts its operations.

6. Responsibilities

- The BAO is responsible for ensuring compliance with the AODA and IASR in all activities, including governance, communication, service provision, and policy development.
- The BAO will review this policy annually or whenever relevant changes to legislation or organizational practices occur.

- The BAO will ensure training is provided to all employees, contractors, and volunteers on the requirements of the AODA and IASR, as well as on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.
- Documentation of training completion will be maintained in compliance with the requirements for BAOs with fewer than 50 employees.

7. Feedback

Comments regarding how well customer expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Customers may provide feedback on the manner in which the Organization provides our services to customers with disabilities through the following channels:

By email to info@thebao.ca

By phone at 1-844-493-6356

In writing, by sending feedback to:

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario
100 Sheppard Avenue East Suite 505
Toronto, ON M2N 6N5.

On our website, by submitting your feedback via the [Contact Us](#) form.

The Organization is prepared to provide accessible formats, and communication supports for persons with disabilities who wish to provide feedback to the Organization, upon request. Customers may contact us using any of the contact methods listed above to request accessible formats and communication supports.

8. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure ongoing compliance with the AODA and IASR. Amendments will be made to address any gaps or improvements identified through feedback or changes in legislation.

The Board of Directors is responsible for reviewing and approving this policy during its regular policy review cycle or whenever significant changes are proposed.