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<b>APPROVAL</b>
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### SALCO Accessibility Policy

#### PURPOSE

The directive of this policy is to acknowledge the systemic and individual barriers that people, including clients, staff members, volunteers and all SALCO affiliates, may experience while accessing services or performing their work duties. The policy aims to set clear expectations and an understanding of the accessibility measures in place at SALCO.

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, clients and volunteers of SALCO.

#### DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
<b>Accessibility</b>	To ensure that a person receives equitable access to SALCO's services and workspaces, regardless of a person's disability. Accessibility is more than the provision of a specific accommodation for a particular need of a person with a disability. Ideally, services, resources, and spaces will be designed to be inclusive at point of development, which will result in equitable access to SALCO's services for all individuals, regardless of abilities.
<b>accommodation</b>	An accommodation is a planned variation in services, in response to a disability based on the way that an individual accesses services, resources, or events. The purpose of an accommodation is to allow an individual to access services or spaces that would otherwise not be accessible without individualized modifications
<b>Disability</b>	It is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in

	<p>which he or she lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Any degree of physical challenges, 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 on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,</li> <li>b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental delay,</li> <li>c) Special learning or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</li> <li>d) A mental disorder, or</li> <li>e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>;</li> </ul>
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## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Name	
Accessible Customer Service Plan	2012
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act	2005

## SECTION 2 - POLICY

### PRINCIPLES

The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) strives to provide high quality legal services in a manner that respects the dignity, independence and full inclusion of all individuals. Staff, volunteers and the Board of Directors of SALCO will make reasonable effort to provide services that are accessible to a diverse client population, and create a work environment that is accessible to all staff and volunteers, while respecting the privacy, dignity and independence of the individuals served.

SALCO will endeavor to satisfy all requests for accessibility from clients, staff, volunteers and all affiliates of SALCO, unless it creates undue hardship (as defined in the Ontario's *Human Rights Code*). Examples of accessibility may include:

- Ensuring that SALCO 's office space provides reasonable physical access that meets client and staff needs (i.e., ensuring the office is reasonably wheelchair accessible);
- Providing documents in large print if requested;
- Ensuring that SALCO staff are flexible in the scheduling and timing of appointments and;
- Accommodating clients who request to attend meetings with a support person or animal.

## 1. Roles and Responsibilities

### 1.1 SALCO will:

- Ensure that all information pertaining to an individual's disability will be kept confidential and within the client's individual file;
- Consult with individuals accessing services and/or use signage at SALCO in regards to any accessibility measures clients may require;
- Educate, when appropriate, staff, volunteers, the Board of Directors, and clients about their rights and responsibilities in relation to this policy;
- Provide resources in accessible formats, when requested
- Incorporate known techniques to enhance inclusive design and accessibility;
- Ensure that appropriate training pertaining to this policy and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) is provided to staff and volunteers;
- Maintain the right to deny accommodation when such an accommodation would qualify as undue hardship.
- Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with equal opportunity to access services, employment and volunteer opportunities at SALCO; and
- Be aware of, and comply with, this policy.

1.1 cont.	<p>SALCO will also provide training for staff and volunteers whether through its own resources or by engaging a third party. Training will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purposes of the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard;</li> <li>• Understanding and communicating with individuals depending on their individual communication methods;</li> <li>• Use of language that is accessible and understandable, and how to provide explanations of legal concepts using appropriate language depending on the individual's needs;</li> <li>• Appropriate actions and measures if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing SALCO 's goods and services; and</li> <li>• Emergency responses that are accessible, specifically for people with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p>Staff and volunteers will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way in which 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.</p>
1.2	<p>Clients requiring accommodation will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide SALCO with the essential and relevant information required to provide access to services.</li> <li>• Contact SALCO in a timely manner to make accommodation requests.</li> <li>• Collaborate with SALCO staff and volunteers to identify accommodation needs and to create solutions, as needed.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>SALCO will communicate with individuals with disabilities (which may include clients, volunteers and or staff members) in ways that promote mutual respect and accessibility. Staff and volunteers will be trained on interacting and</p>

	communicating with people in an accessible and respectful manner when interacting with clients and all who contact SALCO.
2.1	<p><b>Telephone services</b></p> <p>SALCO will offer accessible telephone services to its clients and all who wish to contact SALCO. Staff and volunteers will be continuously trained to communicate with callers over the telephone in ways that meet their needs (i.e., clear and plain language, speaking clearly).</p> <p>In addition, SALCO will ensure that staff is trained on the use of Relay Services to accommodate individuals who use TTY, Voice Carry Over, or Hearing Carry Over.</p> <p>SALCO will continue to offer communication using alternative methods suitable to clients, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Alternative Communication Devices</b></p> <p>SALCO aims to serve those with disabilities who use assistive devices and will ensure that staff and volunteers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing SALCO's services.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Written Communication</b></p> <p>SALCO will provide accessible written material to all of its' clients and all who contact SALCO, at request. If a client does not use written communication, SALCO will endeavor to communicate with the client or prospective client in the way that meets their communication style.</p>
2.4	<p><b>Legal Information</b></p> <p>SALCO will provide legal information to all of its clients both directly or in public legal education sessions upon request, in a manner that is accessible and that can be understood by all who require it. SALCO will attempt to use clear language, and provide explanations of legal concepts and avoid the use of technical terms, when necessary.</p>
2.5	<p><b>Notice of Temporary Disruption</b></p> <p>SALCO will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in its services. This notice will include information about the reason for the</p>

	<p>disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.</p> <p>The notice will be recorded on SALCO's answering machine greeting, will be posted on the office door and the SALCO website.</p>
3.	<b>Use of Service Animals and Support Persons</b>
3.1	<p><b>Use of service animals</b></p> <p>SALCO welcomes those with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal into its offices and to community events that are organized by SALCO. SALCO will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public continue to be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Support Persons</b></p> <p>SALCO welcomes those with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person, be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises or at an event sponsored by SALCO. If an event has a cost, support workers will be admitted for free. SALCO recognizes the importance of interacting with clients directly.</p> <p>SALCO is committed to keeping clients' litigation and legal matters confidential. As such, SALCO informs clients when confidential information will be disclosed and will obtain their consent on whether or not they wish their support person to be privy to such information.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Off-site meetings</b></p> <p>Requests for meetings outside of SALCO's office will be considered, if required to meet the prospective client or accommodate client needs.</p>
5.0	<p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>SALCO staff who notice barriers to accommodation or issues that may open the clinic to potential litigation should report such barriers/issues to the Executive Director, who shall raise such issues with the Board of Directors.</p>
5.1	<p>Client complaints regarding accommodation are to be addressed in accordance with the Complaint's Policy, as posted on the SALCO webpage or accessible through the staff/Executive Director.</p>

Comment [FB1]: I think the word committed actually should be here - confidentiality is extremely important and that word committed seems stronger than aims.

6	<b>Periodic review of this policy</b> This policy will be reviewed every two years.
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