

# Statement of Purpose, Principles, and Structure of the Consumer Access Group/Table Canadienne et Citoyenne en Déficience Visuelle

October 2016

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Consumer Access Group (CAG) is to:

- bring together national, provincial, and local organizations in order to develop position statements on issues important to Canadians with vision loss or who are deaf-blind;
- provide the Canadian public, service providers, and governments a consistent view on issues identified by CAG;
- coordinate advocacy efforts, pool resources, and present a united stance to effect change.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Consumer Access Group will respect the autonomy of each participating organization. Approval of a position statement may be withheld or withdrawn by an organization at any time for any reason, including that the issue falls outside the organization's mandate.
2. The operations of the Consumer Access Group will be conducted in a manner based on mutual respect. Disagreements will be addressed through respectful dialogue.
3. Plans of action will be carried out in a manner conducive to a positive image of Canadians who are blind, deaf-blind, or who are visually impaired.
4. Participating organizations will endeavor to share with each other any information relevant to the work of the Consumer Access Group.

## Structure

1. The chair of the Consumer Access Group will be assigned on a rotating basis with each member organization assuming the role of chair. Alternatively, the role of chair may be assumed by an individual from Canada's community of persons who are blind, deaf-blind or who are visually impaired.

The chair's role will be to facilitate discussions, build consensus, and mediate any disagreements that arise.

The Consumer Access Group will operate using a consensus model.

Membership in the Consumer Access Group shall be determined by the participating organizations. All participating organizations must be either organizations "of"/or "for" the blind or any other organization whose mandate might have an impact on Canadians living with vision loss or who are deaf-blind.

Participating organizations shall be permitted to designate a maximum of 1 (one) organizational representative and 1 (one) alternate whose role it will be to attend meetings in the absence of the primary representative. An organization may, at its own expense, have an observer attend face-to-face meetings along with the organizational representative. An individual shall not be permitted to represent more than one organization at the same time.

The frequency of meetings is to be determined by the volume and urgency of issues with a minimum of two (2) meetings held each year. The meetings shall be held via teleconference and face-to-face as resources allow. Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the chair except that the chair is required to call a meeting if asked to do so by at least 1/3 (one-third) of the organizational representatives.

The Consumer Access Group will determine the method by which issues are communicated to stakeholders on a case by case basis. Such communications may take the form of letters collectively signed by participating organizations, the designation of spokespersons, the use of individual organization websites, and so on.

CNIB will offer administrative support to the Consumer Access Group subject to resource availability. Such support could include

assistance with researching potential advocacy issues, support arranging meetings, minute taking and distribution, and document storage and maintenance.

The preceding purpose and structure have been agreed to by the following participating organizations:

[Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians](#)

[Access for sight impaired Consumers](#)

[Alberta Society for the Visually Impaired – \(ASVI\) Edmonton](#)

[Canadian Council of the Blind](#)

[Canadian Blind Sports Association](#)

[CNIB](#)

[Canadian National Society of the Deaf-blind](#)

[Guide Dog Users of Canada](#)

Last updated October 2016