

Accessibility in the Library – WORKING DOCUMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Orillia Public Library meets or exceeds the compliance requirements set by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (O.Reg 191/11 as amended by O.Reg 165/16)*.

Orillia Public Library's implementation of the accessibility legislation will be in alignment with the Library's Mission and Values, including the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Orillia Public Library acknowledges that accessibility is a shared responsibility between library patrons, staff, partners, and the general public.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Orillia Public Library is committed to providing accessible, equitable and inclusive access to library services and facilities. The Library will ensure that each employee, volunteer and patron receives equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required in a timely manner, and in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA* and its regulations.

The Orillia Public Library will develop and support a service environment where the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in accordance with the principles of dignity, respect, equity, and inclusion.

The Library will provide training to its Board members, staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training, as per O.Reg 191/11 (80.49). All employees will be familiar and act in accordance with these Accessible Customer Service ideals.

Section 2: Responsibilities

1. For the purposes of *AODA*, the library provides services on behalf of the municipality, and therefore is considered, along with the municipality, to be a designated public sector organization that is a "large organization" [...] with 50 or more employees in Ontario, other than the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly or a designated public sector organization" as defined within the *O.Reg 191/11*. The Library complies with the obligations for this sector as set out in the *AODA* regulations.
2. The Board ensures that the Library complies with the spirit, principles, and intent of the *AODA* and designates the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as the individual accountable for the organization's compliance with legislation.
3. The CEO will ensure that policy, procedures, and training comply with the *AODA* and any regulations made under the *AODA*.

Section 3: The Accessibility Plan

1. The Library will work with the municipality to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the Library's strategy to identify, prevent, and remove systemic accessibility barriers and meet its legislated compliance requirements under the *IASP*.
2. The Library Board will consider and formally adopt the municipality's multi-year accessibility plan.

Section 4: Policies and Procedures

1. In accordance with *O.Reg 165/16*, relating to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*, the Library has developed this policy to include the required Customer Service elements, and the Library's other policies will support accessibility, in these specific areas:
 - a) the purchasing policy will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or products (and in the event where it is not practicable to procure accessible goods, services, or products the Library will document the reason within any files or reports related to the project);
 - b) the Internet Services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to the Library's website as outlined under the Web Content Accessibilities Guidelines (WCAG);
 - c) the Human Resource policies will address training on *AODA* regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;
 - d) the Collection Development policy will address the availability of materials in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. print, audio, visual, digital, etc.);
 - e) the Programming policy will address the development and delivery of library programs to provide reasonable accommodations for accessibility needs.

Section 5: Customer Service

Orillia Public Library is committed to the independence and inclusion of persons with disabilities in our community, and in the context of customer service will commit to the following:

1. The Library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
 - a. encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access library services and programs;
 - b. providing at least one computer workstation which is equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features;
 - c. arranging for the provision of accessible materials where they exist;
 - d. providing a library website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG);

- e. supporting the inclusion of support persons or service animals accompanying people with disabilities, such as by:
 - i. waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification;
 - ii. permitting service animals to assist users and providing alternative accommodation in situations where a service animal is excluded from the premises by law. While accessing the Library's premises, the person with a disability is responsible for ensuring their service animal is clearly identified by a vest, harness, or documentation provided by the individual, and that the service animal behaves in a professional manner.
2. The Library will make every effort to communicate with users in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by providing:
 - a. this "Accessibility in the Library" policy in alternative formats upon request;
 - b. information on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and accessible services and programs;
 - c. reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities;
 - d. a feedback process that is accessible to persons with disabilities, by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.
3. The Library will provide training as required to its Board members, staff and volunteers on *AODA*, the accessibility standards and on the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it pertains to providing customer service to persons with disabilities, and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Section 6: Communication

1. The Library shall make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and make the public aware of the availability of accessible formats. This applies to communications such as:
 - a. policies;
 - b. accessibility plans;
 - c. emergency procedures, plans, and public safety information prepared for the public;
 - d. forms, surveys, and other tools used to gather feedback;
 - e. information on collections/materials in accessible format, and
 - f. employment standards.
2. Accessible formats of the library's communications shall be made available:

- a. in a timely manner;
 - b. at no additional cost to the individual, and
 - c. in consultation with the person making the request.
3. In the event of a scheduled service disruption that will impact persons with disabilities in accessing the Library, notice of the planned disruption will be provided at least 48 hours in advance. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, anticipated length of the disruption, and a description of alternate accommodations (if any). In the event of an unplanned service disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.
 4. The Library welcomes feedback from persons with disabilities on the accessibility of its collections, services, programs, and facilities. The Library will strive to communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that meets their individual accessibility needs.

Definitions

“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. Also referred to as alternate formats

“Assistive devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enable a person with a disability to do everyday tasks. Examples include Braille recorders, recording devices, magnifiers, and more.

A **“barrier”** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Communication supports” are tools or devices that facilitate communications for a person with a **disability** may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“Disability” as defined in the AODA, disability means:

(a) 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 on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

(c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

(d) a mental disorder, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)

“Service Animal” means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, episodic, intellectual, or a mental health disability. Tasks performed can include, among other things, guiding, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, alerting a person to a sound, reminding a person to take medication, or pressing an elevator button.

“Support Person” is, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the individual with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.