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Policy Statement

The Library will ensure the provision of equal access for all members of the community to all Library resources, services and facilities, in compliance with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Definitions

Accessibility standard: an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA

Barrier: 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, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

Person who is blind: a person who, because of blindness, is dependent on a service animal or white cane.

Disability:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused
 - a. by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,
 - b. 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 service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or the spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or

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

Guide dog: a dog trained as a guide for a person who is blind and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the “*Blind Persons Rights*” Act.

Service Animal: an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, if

- a) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability.

Support Person: a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.

Guidelines

1. Guiding Principles:

The Library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible.

- i. Library service is relevant, inclusive and responsive for all, including persons with disabilities. Each member of the community has an equal opportunity to access public library services.
- ii. Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- iii. The Library strives to provide universal access to its services for all people through integration unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Library services

2. Communication:

The Library will communicate with people with a disability in ways that take into account their disability.

3. Assistive Devices:

A person with a disability may use their own assistive devices, or other measures that assist with accessibility, to access Library services. It is the responsibility of the person using the assistive device to ensure that it is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Library has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations, the Library may offer other reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using and benefitting from the Library’s services, where the Library has such other measures available.

4. Service Animals and Guide Dogs:

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated by the Library accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Library shall look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Library's services.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their service animal or guide dog is kept in control at all times. The safety, care and protection of the community at large shall take priority over any individual.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Library may ask the person with a disability for a letter of confirmation of the animal's status.

5. Support Persons:

A person with a disability may enter Library premises with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises. If it is not readily apparent that a support person is required, the Library may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a medical professional confirming the person requires a support person for reasons relating to their disability. A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain or use Library services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of others.

6. Training:

All Library employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and any other people who interact with the public, and those who develop policies and procedures on the provision of services to the public, will receive training as required by the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. Training shall be provided as soon as practicable as well as on an ongoing basis, reflecting any changes to Library policies and practices governing the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

7. Accessibility Services Feedback:

The Library welcomes public feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities as it may identify areas that require change and encourages service improvement. Comments and suggestions can be given by mail, telephone, fax, email or in person, and must include the person's name and contact information. The Library will strive to provide responses to feedback within ten (10) business days from its receipt.