

Accessibility in the Library

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The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Port Colborne Public Library meets the standards set out 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).

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

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The library is committed to providing accessible, equitable, and inclusive access to library services and to its facility. The library establishes and implements practices and procedures that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

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 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 meet the obligations set out in the AODA and the current accompanying regulations, in partnership with the City of Port Colborne where applicable.

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 “**small designated public sector organization with at least one but fewer than 50 employees**” as defined within the O. Reg. 165/16. 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 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 policies and procedures comply with the AODA and any regulations made under the AODA.

Section 3: The Accessibility Plan

1. The City of Port Colborne’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (“the Plan”), which includes the Port Colborne Public Library Board, outlines the strategy to prevent and remove barriers and to meet its requirements under the regulation.
2. The City of Port Colborne will include the library in all reports, plans, assessments, and communications to the province.
3. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
4. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
5. The plan will be posted on the City’s website and can be provided in alternate formats upon request

Section 4: Policies and Procedures

1. In accordance with the O. Reg 165/16, relating to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, the library has developed this present Accessibility in the Library policy which includes 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 Accessibility 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

The library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities, 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 our services and programs
 - b) providing at least one computer workstation at each location which is equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features
 - c) arranging for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist which may include archival material and special collections
 - d) providing a library website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level 2
 - e) supporting the inclusion of support persons or service animals accompanying people with disabilities such as by:
 - waiving fees for support persons, and when fees are required providing advance notification
 - permitting service animals to assist users and providing alternative accommodation in situations where an 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) alternative formats of the Accessibility in the Library policy will be made available 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 program for people with disabilities such as the library's elevator
 - d) a process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the library provides services to persons with disabilities
3. 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.

Section 6: Communication

1. The library shall make its communications available, upon request, in alternate 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, plan 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 formats
 - f) employment standards
2. Accessible formats of the library's communications shall be made available:
 - g) in a timely manner
 - h) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communication
 - i) 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.

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.

“Assistive devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enables 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” 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.

“Service animal” refers to an animal used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or,
- b) the person provides documentation from one of designated, regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability: (O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

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

Related Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11
And Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and
amendments to this regulation under Ontario Regulation 165/16
- City of Port Colborne. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Ontario Building Code
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)