

POLICY: ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

SECTION: GENERAL – MISCELLANEOUS

MOTION#/DATE: 10 - 013 – January 18, 2010

REVISED: 12 - March 27, 2012

Effective Date: January 18, 2010

Policy Objective

The goal of this policy is to ensure that Toronto Public Library meets or exceeds the standards set by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”) and its regulations and provides accessible library services to Toronto residents.

Statement of Commitment and Policy

Toronto Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service that meets the changing needs of all Torontonians, including persons with disabilities in a welcoming and supportive environment. The Library will develop and support a work and service environment where the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in accordance with the principles of dignity, independence and integration. Toronto Public Library will meet or exceed the standards set by the AODA and its regulations.

In developing and delivering service and programs to persons with disabilities, the Library will be guided by the service values of equity and diversity in the treatment of individuals. The Library will make reasonable efforts to establish, implement and monitor policies, services and practices that balance the needs of persons with disabilities and others to support the accessibility standards of customer service, information and communication, employment and the built environment established under the AODA.

Scope

This policy applies to the delivery of operations, services and programs provided by Toronto Public Library.

1.0 Library Policies

Library policies will be applied in a way that considers the needs of persons with disabilities and respects the principles of dignity, independence and integration

2.0 Information and Communication

Library staff and volunteers will communicate with persons with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration.

Toronto Public Library will make its website and web content accessible.

3.0 Training for Staff and Volunteers

The Library will provide and document ongoing training on the AODA legislation and requirements for employees, volunteers and contractors who interact with the public or who participate in the development of policies on behalf of the Library.

4.0 Feedback Process

The Library welcomes customer feedback and makes information on how to provide feedback available in accessible format. Staff assistance is available to support all residents, including persons with disabilities, in providing feedback and the Library, when requested, will make reasonable efforts to communicate with customers in a format of choice. Responses to customer feedback will be given in a timely manner, in accordance with the Library's Customer Feedback Standard.

5.0 Requests for Accommodation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*

The Library will continue to meet the standards set by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* ("Code"). Where a request for accommodation is made, the Library will strive to provide accommodation in a way that most respects the dignity of the person. The Library recognizes that persons with disabilities may require individualized accommodation and that each person's needs are unique. Accommodation will be provided unless the Library experiences "undue hardship" as defined in the Code.

Specific Directives

6.0 Provision of Services

In keeping with Toronto Public Library's mission of providing free and equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, the Library will:

- provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities and provides them with an equal opportunity to learn about, use or benefit from library services;
- integrate services for persons with disabilities. The Library understands that equitable access sometimes requires different treatment including separate or specialized services. However, such services will be offered in a way that respects the dignity and full participation of persons with disabilities.

7.0 Service Animals

The Library welcomes service animals that are needed to assist persons with disabilities.

8.0 Support People

The Library welcomes persons with disabilities and accompanying support people. If discussing personal or confidential information, staff will ask the person if they prefer his or her support person to remain present.

In most cases, the Library does not charge for the programs and services that it offers. However, when admission fees are charged for library programs or services, admission fees will be waived for support people, or advance notice will be given of any admission fees that support people must pay.

9.0 Assistive Devices

The Library will make reasonable efforts to facilitate the use of assistive devices that enable persons with disabilities to use the Library's services. The Library offers a broad range of assistive devices including communication supports to help meet the reading needs of persons with disabilities.

The Library also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways. Persons with disabilities may use personal assistive devices while accessing the Library, unless there is a health and safety risk.

10.0 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

The Library will provide notice of service disruptions which include the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption will last and a description of available alternatives, if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

11.0 Information and Documentation on Accessible Customer Service

The Library will document its policies, practices and procedures as required by the AODA and its regulations. Members of the public will be notified of the availability of this documentation which will be available in a variety of formats upon request at no additional cost.

12.0 Accessible Materials

The Library will provide access to materials in accessible formats where materials exist.

13.0 Procurement

The Library will incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services and facilities, except where it is not practical as defined in the Act.

The Library will incorporate accessibility features and criteria when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

14.0 Employment

The Library will incorporate accessibility considerations into its recruitment and hiring practices and procedures, if requested.

The Library will build in accessibility needs into its human resources, practices, policies and procedures.

15.0 Emergency Plans

The Library will provide emergency plans in accessible formats upon request.

Accountability

The City Librarian and Directors are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Planning, Policy and E-Services Department is responsible for maintaining supporting documentation associated with the Act.

Toronto Public Library is responsible for reporting to the Ministry of Community and Social Service on its compliance with the Act and its Standards.

Appendices

Appendix 1: References

Appendix 2: Definitions

Appendix 1: References

Ontario Human Rights Code

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - O. Reg. 429/07](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - O. Reg. 191/11](#)

Appendix 2: 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 Device”

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting (examples include, walkers, magnifiers for reading, etc...).

“Barrier”

A barrier is any policy, practice or procedure, attitude or part of the built environment, that prevents someone with a disability from participating fully in library programs or services because of his or her disability.

“Communication Support

A tool or device that facilitates communication for a person with a disability, including but not limited to captioning, sign language, and personal listening systems.

“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”)

“Reasonable Efforts”

The Customer Service Standard requires organizations to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The Library defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of persons with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers to access and with the community at large, the health and safety of Library staff and volunteers, the security of Library property and existing laws and contracts.