

POLICY: ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SECTION: GENERAL – MISCELLANEOUS

MOTION#/DATE: 10 – – January 18, 2010

REVISED:

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.

Policy Statement

Toronto Public Library welcomes and encourages people with disabilities to use library services. The Library will provide access to library services for people with disabilities in a way that respects their rights to dignity, independence and integration.

This commitment is consistent with the Library’s mission to deliver services in a welcoming and supportive environment and with the Library’s core value of equity; accessibility, diversity and fairness in the treatment of all individuals.

The Library will establish policies, practices and procedures which support the accessibility standards established under the AODA on customer service, information and communication, employment and the built environment.

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 people with disabilities and respects the principles of dignity, independence and integration.

2.0 Communication

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

3.0 Training for Staff and Volunteers

The Library will train staff, volunteers and contractors who interact with the public, to meet the needs of people with disabilities. This includes the training and documentation requirements in the AODA and its regulations.

4.0 Feedback Process

The Library welcomes customer feedback and makes information available to all customers on how to provide feedback. Feedback is accepted by the Library in a variety of formats. Staff assistance is available to support all residents, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

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 people 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 - Customer Service

The following directives address the requirements established by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (“Customer Service Standard”):

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 people with disabilities and provides them with an equal opportunity to learn about, use or benefit from library services;
- integrate services for people 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 people with disabilities.

7.0 Service Animals

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

8.0 Support People

The Library welcomes people with disabilities and accompanying support people. 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 people with disabilities to use the Library's services. The Library offers a broad range of assistive devices to help meet the reading needs of people with disabilities. The Library also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways.

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 Customer Service Standard. Members of the public will be notified of the availability of this documentation which will be available in a variety of formats.

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 Customer Service Standard.

Definitions

“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, 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.

“Disability”

As defined in the AODA, disability can include: a) physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement, b) mental impairment or developmental disability, c) learning disability, d) mental disorder, and e) an injury or disability for which government benefits are received.

“Reasonable Efforts”

The Customer Service Standard requires organizations to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The Library defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of people 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.