

Accessibility in the Library Policy

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Policy Title: Accessibility in the Library	Policy Approval Date: March 2024
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Introduction:

This policy reflects the regulations set out in *Ontario Regulation 165/16*, a regulation passed in 2016 which replaced *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)* and specific sections of *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)*.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Norfolk County Public Library meets the standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* and its regulations and provides accessible library services.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Norfolk County Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service. 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 in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA and its regulations.

The Norfolk County Public Library meets the obligations set out in the AODA and the current accompanying regulations in partnership with Norfolk County.

Section 2: Definitions

“**Accessible formats**” may include, but are not limited to, large print, audiobook, eAudiobooks, and eBooks, 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.

“**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

- 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,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

“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,

- 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
- the person provides documentation from 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.

Section 3: 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 4: 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 prevent and remove barriers.
2. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
3. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
4. The plan is posted on the library's website and will be provided in accessible formats upon request.

Section 5: 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 the Accessibility in the Library policy which includes the required Customer Service elements. 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 facilities;
 - b) the Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to the library's website;
 - 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.).

Section 6: Customer Service

The Norfolk County Public Library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in the 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 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) encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
 - f) waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification.

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 process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the library provides services to persons with disabilities.

3. Training will be provided 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 7: 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 communication support. In this context, the types of communications include:
 - 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, and
 - f) employment standards.

2. Accessible formats of the library's communications shall be made available:
 - a) in a timely manner,
 - b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communications, and
 - c) in consultation with the person making the request.

Related Documents:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11 Ontario Regulation 165/16 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11 and amending O Reg. 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)