



<b>Policy Name:</b>	Accessibility in the Library Policy		
<b>Section:</b>	System	<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 28, 2011
<b>Motion Number:</b>	21-11	<b>Reviewed Date:</b>	February 25, 2021
<b>Policy Number:</b>	SYS-21	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	October 2028

## Purpose

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

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Board members, placement students or any other persons who engage with patrons, and to third parties who engage with patrons on the Library's behalf, such as community partners providing programs.

## Policy

The Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service that meets the changing needs of patrons 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. The Library will meet or exceed the standards set by the AODA and its regulations.

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, in cooperation with the City of Barrie.

## Scope

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

- 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
- Library staff members and volunteers will communicate with persons with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration
- The Library will endeavor to make its website and web content accessible to the level prescribed in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations* (IASR)
- The Library will provide and document ongoing training on the AODA 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
- The Library welcomes patron feedback and makes information on how to provide feedback available in accessible formats upon request. Staff assistance is available to support patrons, including persons with disabilities, in providing feedback in a format of their choice. Responses to patron feedback will be given in a timely manner
- The Library will continue to meet the standards set by the *Ontario Human Rights 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

## Specific Directives

### Provision of Services

The Library cares about and responds to the needs of our community and our colleagues. To provide equitable access, 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

### Service Animals

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

### Support People

The Library welcomes persons with disabilities and accompanying support people. If discussing personal or confidential information, staff members will ask the person if they prefer their 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.

### 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 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## Accessible Materials

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

## Emergency Plans

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

## 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 AODA.

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

## Employment

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

The Library will also maintain a system-wide, multi-departmental Accessibility Committee. This Committee is established in accordance with specific Terms of Reference. The Committee will report to the CEO through the Management Team. Recommendations of the Committee will be reviewed by the Management Team and are not final until approved by the CEO.

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Under the AODA, designated/large organizations may prepare multi-year accessibility plans that identify which of the actions the Library has used in the past year as well as plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers confronting persons with disabilities. A multi-year accessibility plan and report will be prepared with input from the Accessibility Committee.

## Definitions

**“Accessible materials”** 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 products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enables them to carry out daily tasks. Assistive devices may include, but are not limited to, mobility aids, braille recorders, magnifiers.

**“Disability”** as defined in the AODA:

- 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 coordination, 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

- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*
- Disabilities can be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary. Interpretive decisions relating to this definition made under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* are accepted as included in this definition

**“Service Animals”** are any animal used by a person for reasons relating to a 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
- the person provides documentation from a designated, regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

**“Support Person”** is a person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs.

**“Reasonable Effort”** is defined as providing the best possible accommodation without causing undue hardship.