

Laurentian Hills Public Library

Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number:	OP-3
Policy Title:	Accessibility in the Library	Municipal Policy Adopted:	October 2009
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The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Laurentian Hills Public Library meets or exceeds the compliance requirements set 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)*.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Laurentian Hills Public Library is committed to providing accessible, equitable, and inclusive access to library services and facilities. 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 Laurentian Hills Public 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 meets these obligations in partnership with the Town of Laurentian Hills.

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 designated public sector organization that is a “small organization” [...] with at least one but fewer than 50 employees in Ontario, other than the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly or a designated public sector organization” as defined within the *O. Reg. 191/11*. 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 the *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, procedures, and training comply with the *AODA* and any regulations made under the *AODA*.

Section 3: The Accessibility Plan

1. The library will work with the Town of Laurentian Hills to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the library’s strategy to prevent, and remove accessibility barriers and meet its legislated compliance requirements under the *IASR*.

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 will be posted on the library's website in an accessible format and be provided in accessible 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 to include the required Customer Service elements; and the library's other policies will support accessibility, in these specific areas:
 - a) the collection development policy will address the availability of materials in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. print, audio, visual, digital, etc.);
 - b) the purchasing policy will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities;
 - c) the Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to technology and the library's website;
 - d) the human resource policies will address training on AODA regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;

Section 5: Customer Service

The Laurentian Hills Public Library is committed to the independence and inclusion of persons with disabilities in our 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 library 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 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 the required standards for Accessibility;
 - e) supporting the inclusion of support persons or service animals accompanying people with disabilities, such as by:
 - i. waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification;
 - ii. permitting service animals to assist users and providing alternative accommodation in situations where a service 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) 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 program for people with disabilities;
 - 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 accessible 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 (if applicable),
 - 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 format, and
 - f) employment standards.
2. Accessible formats of the library's communications shall be made available:
- a) in a timely manner,
 - b) at no additional cost to the individual, and
 - c) 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.
4. 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

“Accessibility” means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

“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. Also referred to as alternate formats.

“Assistive devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enable a person with a disability to do everyday tasks. Examples include magnifiers, Braille recorders, 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” as defined in the AODA 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) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- b) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- c) a mental disorder, or
- d) 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”)

“Library service” means what the library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of core values and/or community needs.

“Service Animals” means an animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, episodic, intellectual, or a mental health disability. Tasks performed can include, among other things, guiding, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, alerting a person to a sound, reminding a person to take medication, or pressing an elevator button.

“Service animals and emotional support animals” refers to animals used by a person for reasons relating to a disability.

- a) An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability; or 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)
- b) An animal is an emotional support animal (ESA) if its use is supported by a qualified physician, psychiatrist or other mental health professional based upon a disability-related need. ESAs do not have training for specific tasks, and service providers are not required to allow ESAs on their premises under the AODA. The Library may allow ESAs. They may, however, ask for proof that a customer’s animal is a support animal if not visibly obvious.

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

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)
Town of Laurentian Hills Accessibility Policy, 2009
Town of Laurentian Hills Accessibility Plan, 2023