



Belleville
Public Library &
John M. Parrott Art Gallery

LIBRARY POLICY

Policy Title: ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Policy Type: Board - Operational

Date of Last Review: July 2023

Approved: July 2023 (pending Board approval)

Policy Number: BPL002

Background

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

The Belleville Public Library and John M. Parrott Art Gallery (the Library) is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. The Library welcomes and encourages people with disabilities to use library services. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and all Ontario accessibility laws.

We 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.

In keeping with the Library's mandate to provide free and equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, we 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.

Information and Communications

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staff assistance is available to support all patrons, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Customer Feedback

The Library welcomes customer feedback and makes information available to all customers on how to provide feedback. Feedback is accepted through any reasonable method of direct communication requested by patrons.

This may include the following communication methods:

- verbal / in-person discussion
- print or online written feedback forms
- hand-written notes
- sign-language interpreters
- phone (voice) call or text messaging
- video conferencing
- through support workers

The following graphic will be added to Customer Feedback Forms as a reminder of accessibility options:



This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

When an accessible format is requested, we will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability or availability of the format requested.

If we determine that information or communications requested are unconvertible to an accessible format, we will provide the requestor with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible, and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

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 any available. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

Website

We will meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

We will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports through an "Accessibility" section on our website. This page will include information about accessible content available to patrons through our borrowing collections and other services, and information about how to provide feedback to the Library, or to request the purchase of specific materials or formats for the borrowing collection.

The following notice will be posted to the Library website "Contact Us" page:

We can arrange for accessible feedback and provide alternate formats for any document upon request. If you have accessibility concerns or requests, please contact us, or visit the library to speak with staff.

Accessible formats

The Library provides access to or arranges the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist. We will provide information in accessible format or with appropriate communication support upon request.

The Library will provide a borrowing collection that is accessible to people with disabilities. All genres and subject areas in our collection will include content in accessible formats.

Accessible formats may include:

- Large Print books
- CD audiobooks
- Digital / downloadable audiobooks
- eBooks
- DVD movies and television
- Digital / streaming movies and television

Employment

We will notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We will notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request.

We will consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation, and will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment. We will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We will provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employees accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We will have a formal process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees, and a formal process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations to return to work.

Training

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility will be tailored to their specific roles as much as possible.

We will train every person as soon as practicable after being hired, and also will provide follow-up training for all staff when policies or procedures change. We will maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Staff will be trained to accept feedback in a variety of ways to serve patrons in the manner they prefer.

In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training will include:

- purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- the Ontario Human Rights Code
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities, such as book magnifiers or text messaging devices
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities.

Support People

The Library welcomes people with disabilities and accompanying support people. When admission fees are charged for library programs or services, admission fees will be waived for support people. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Service Animals

The Library welcomes service animals that are needed to assist people with disabilities. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

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 also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways.

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.

Approved by the CEO, pending final Board approval.

Signature of Chief Executive Officer:



Trevor Ross

Date: 27 July 2023