

LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY

Title of Policy: **Accessibility for Users with Disabilities**

Policy Type: Means

Policy No.: M-04

Effective Date: April 18, 2013

Review: April, 2017

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that London Public Library (LPL)

- Provides all library services, resources and facilities in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities and
- Is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and is consistent with City of London policies, standards and guidelines pertaining to accessibility.

OBJECTIVE:

LPL recognizes and understands the diversity of the communities we serve and provides responsive Library services and outreach to meet unique community needs.

LPL endeavours to provide “universal access” to library services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design in order to integrate services to persons with disabilities.

LPL facilitates accessibility through the recognition, removal and prevention of obstacles for individuals with disabilities.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to members of the public and all persons who are:

- Library employees, Board members and volunteers;
- Students on placement; and
- Third parties who provide service on the Library’s behalf such as those providing program services.

DEFINITIONS:

“**AODA**” means the Accessibility for Ontarians for Disabilities Act, 2005

“**Assistive Device**” means a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities

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“Core Service Delivery Streams” means reference, referral and readers’ services; collections; lending; technology; and programming and outreach.

“Disability or Disabilities” 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, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, 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 or service dog or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device, an intellectual development 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, 1997.

“Guide Dog” means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.

“Library Premises” means premises owned and operated, or operated by the London Public Library.

“Library Services” means what the Library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of community needs.

“Persons who Provide Library Services” means employees, volunteers, Board member, student placement or person or otherwise engaged in the provision of Library services to our customers, and third parties who deal with customers on the Library’s behalf such as those providing program services or renting Library premises for performances and events open to the public.

“Service Animal” means any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons related to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

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“Support Person” means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs.

“Universal Access” means to provide access to services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the London Public Library that the Library is committed to providing quality Library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use Library services. The same principles articulated below apply to those persons with disabilities who are employed by the Library.

1. Guiding Principles

- 1.1 Library service is relevant, inclusive and responsive for all, including persons with disabilities. Each member of the community has an equal opportunity to access public library services.
- 1.2 The Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- 1.3 The Library strives to provide “universal access” to library services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design in order to integrate services to persons with disabilities. The Library will offer alternative measures, including trained staff support, where necessary, so that persons with disabilities may obtain and use library services.

BACKGROUND:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005) is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and

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other persons or organizations which provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

The City of London, Accessible Customer Service Policy, upon which the Library policy is based, is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

The Integrated Accessibility Regulation 191/11, effective January 1, 2012 and phased through to 2021, addresses standards related to Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Built Environment.

Accessibility for Users with Disabilities: Customer Service Standards

2. Library Service Delivery Streams

- 2.1 All Library services in each of the Library service delivery streams and in all service locations are accessible by persons with disabilities.
- 2.2 The Library strives to provide Library services in a way that meets the specific needs of the person with disabilities and is convenient and accessible to the person with disabilities.

3. Communications with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

4. Temporary Service Disruptions

The Library will make reasonable effort to provide notice of planned or unplanned disruption of Library services to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or service, if any, that may be available. In the case of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible.

5. Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

- 5.1 A person with a disability may provide his/her own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using Library services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Library has determined that the assistive device may

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pose a risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or to the health and safety of others on Library premises. In these situations, the Library may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using Library services, where the Library has such other measures available.

- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

6. Service Animals and Guide Dogs

- 6.1 Persons with a disability may enter Library premises accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Library will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Library services.
- 6.2 If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal or a guide dog, Library staff may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status, as outlined above.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal or guide dog is kept in control at all times.

7. Support Persons

- 7.1 A person with a disability may enter Library premises with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.
- 7.2 The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Library premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the Library premises.
- 7.3 A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain or use Library services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

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8. Training

8.1 The Library will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training will be dependent on a person's interactions with Library users.

8.2 The content of the training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the AODA;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07);
- Instructions on Library policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to the provision of Library services to users with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with users with various types of disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Library services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal; and
- Information about the equipment or devices available on Library premises that may help with the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

8.3 A record of training provided to persons to whom this act applies on the AODA and this policy will be kept by the Manager, Training and Development.

8.4 Training will be provided as part of orientation training for new employees and on a continuing basis as required.

9. Feedback on Services

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

10. Availability of Documents

10.1 Policy documents will be available on the Library's website.

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- 10.2 Policy documents will be provided, consistent with the requirements of the AODA and Ontario Reg. 429/07.

Accessibility for Users with Disabilities: Integrated Accessibility Regulation – 191/11

The Library is committed to ensuring that compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulation is achieved according to the effective dates indicated in the legislation.

11. Part One – General

- 11.1 The Library will produce an *Accessibility Plan*, of not more than five (5) years in scope, which will describe the processes and steps taken to remove barriers to service to persons with disabilities. In keeping with the Library's community-led perspective, this plan will be developed with the assistance of members of the community with disabilities. The Plan will be reviewed and updated every 5 years. A copy of the Plan is available to the public on the Library's web site and in an accessible format, upon request.
- 11.2 The Library ensures that the accessibility of new goods, services or facilities is considered during the procurement process. See *London Public Library Procurement Policy*.
- 11.3 Upon renovation, or in the case of new installation, self-service kiosks will incorporate accessibility designs, as available in the marketplace.
- 11.4 Training of staff, as outlined in the *Integrated Standards Regulation*, will be provided to all staff and this training will be tracked by the Manager of Training and Development. New staff shall be provided the training upon the commencement of their employment.

12. Part Two – Information and Communications

- 12.1 The Library ensures that staff has a process for communicating the needs of persons with disabilities for the provision of information in an accessible format in a timely manner. The customer will be consulted for his/her preferred format and be advised of the variety of formats available.

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- 12.2 Any emergency information available to the public is made available in a format suitable for the person's disability. The Library ensures that customer service responses are prepared and practiced by staff to ensure the safety of all patrons in Library spaces.
- 12.3 The Library's web site, intranet, and web content will conform to World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA, within the designated schedule.
- 12.4 The Library purchases accessible materials in a variety of formats for the use of all patrons in accordance with the Collections Management Policy:

"10. LPL provides a variety of formats to facilitate equity of access to intellectual content and to support people in the various ways they prefer or need in order to access and use content. Specialized collection formats are provided for those users who cannot use regular materials, including people with disabilities."

Information about the availability of accessible materials is available on the web site or by consultation with staff through a variety of feedback mechanisms.

The Library has undertaken to convert archival materials and special local history collections to a digitized form to ensure the broadest accessibility.

The Library partners with other organizations, such as CNIB, to provide further access to diverse collections, through direct access or Interlibrary Loan.

13. Part Three – Employment

- 13.1 The Library is committed to ensuring that at all phases of the employment process: recruitment, hiring, training and performance management, a person with disabilities has the opportunity to succeed. Accommodation during any of those processes is available, upon request. The person with a disability will be consulted as to the most appropriate accommodation

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based on his or her needs. Notification of accommodation is provided at all points of access.

Policies, guidelines, procedures, job aids and other information required for an employee's success is made available in accessible formats, upon request.

- 13.2 An individual may require an accommodation related to his or her disability or may be returning to work experiencing a disability. Individual Accommodation Plans for employees are developed collaboratively between Human Resources and the individual and, as required, a healthcare professional.
- 13.3 It is understood that where a collective bargaining agreement is in place the terms of the agreement as they relate to accommodation will be followed.
- 13.4 Safety and emergency information is provided in the format required by an employee's disability as part of the orientation process.

14. Part Four – Design of Public Spaces Standards

The Library strives to create and maintain facilities for the public that follow the principles of universal access, and will meet or exceed legislation and the City of London *Facility Accessibility Design Standards*.

- 14.1 When building new facilities or undertaking significant renewal of exterior paths of travel, the Library will ensure that all specifications of this Regulation and the *Building Code Act of Ontario, 1992*. O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6., along with the City of London *Facility Accessibility Design Standards*, are followed. These standards apply to any external paths, ramps, curbs or stairs on library property.
- 14.2 When building new or undertaking renewal of existing Library parking lots, the Library will ensure that the spacing and number of designated spots is in accordance with this Regulation.

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- 14.3 All items in an LPL facility: collections, desks, furniture and equipment are designed to serve all patrons of the Library, including those with disabilities. Service counters are designed to accommodate those patrons using mobility aids. Staff are trained in appropriate customer service responses to ensure the needs of patrons are met.
- 14.4 Collections are placed in such a manner as to accommodate access by persons with disabilities. Staff training includes the need to assist patrons in accessing collections.

INQUIRIES:

CEO & Chief Librarian
Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations
Manager, Human Resources

KEYWORDS:

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Canadian Human Rights Act
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)
Ontario Human Rights Code
City of London, Facility Accessibility Design Standards
LPL Charter of Library Use
LPL Delegations and Public Participation Policy
LPL Procurement Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

Approved: November 21, 2007 – (Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities)
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