



## REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 22, 2009

Session:	Public
Subject:	Accessibility for Users with Disabilities Policy: Customer Service Standards
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Purpose of Report:	For Decision: Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the **Accessibility for Users with Disabilities Policy: Customer Service Standards**, in **Appendix 1**, be approved.

### **Issue / Opportunity**

London Public Library is committed to providing quality library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use library services.

On November 21, 2007, the Library Board approved the **Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities Policy** developed in response to legislative requirements of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005**, and the **LPL Vision, Mission, Value Promise** and **Service Excellence Model**.

The purpose of the attached draft policy is to ensure that:

- LPL is compliant with the "Customer Service Standards" requirements of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, and
- Library policy is consistent with the **City of London Accessible Customer Service Policy**.

### **Background & Review**

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.

The **AODA** is comprised of five “Standards Areas”:

- Customer Service,
- Information and Communications,
- Employment,
- Built Environment, and
- Transportation.

Provincial committees have been working on developing specific standards in all areas within a sequential completion and implementation schedule. The full Act is expected to be implemented by 2025.

The policy contained in **Appendix 1** is the LPL policy for “Customer Service Standards” and is the first of several LPL policy statements pertaining to the **AODA** Standards that will be brought to the Library Board over the next few years as the provincial standards are developed.

The City of London has been active in providing both leadership and input into the development of the standards. The City of London has a number of staff pro-actively involved in the standards development process as well as serving either as Chairs or members of AMO Resource Support groups. In addition, the City of London is in the process of establishing an AODA Steering Committee to determine the implications of AODA and to oversee the implementation of the AODA Standards within the City.

LPL has also actively participated in the standards development process. To date, LPL has provided input into the Built Environment and Information and Communications standards. LPL expertise has been specifically sought out by the City of London and by the Federation of Ontario Libraries.

## **Customer Service Standards**

### **Scope of the Policy**

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” was adopted in 2007 and came into force on January 1, 2008 with compliance dates of January 1, 2010 for all public sector organizations.

The Regulation establishes general accessibility standards for customer service for public sector organizations and 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 Ontario Regulation 429/07.

The attached LPL policy applies to:

- Library services as defined in the **LPL Service Excellence Model**: “Library services are what the Library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of community needs”; and
- All persons who deal with customers, or to other third parties who deal with customers on the Library’s behalf such as those providing program services.

A person or third party can be an employee, volunteer, Board member, student on placement or otherwise engaged in the provision of Library services to our customers.

## **Guiding Principles**

The policy is based on the following guiding principles for accessible library service:

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.

The Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

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.

## **Next Steps**

Given the requirements, including the timelines, for implementation of the provincial legislation, the Manager, Training and Development is developing a training program with related guidelines, procedures and job aids. Staff training on the policy and standards will begin 2009 and meet the implementation deadline of January 2010. LPL staff have met with City staff to discuss opportunities for the Library to share its expertise in customer service training and practice.

LPL will continue to participate in the development of the other standards and advise the Board on the progress of legislation and its impact on Library policy and services.