



Accessibility Policy

Authority: Library Board

Date Created: December 10, 2009

Date Reviewed: November 25, 2021

Category: Public Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Library is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations. This policy applies to the delivery of operations, services and programs provided by East Gwillimbury Public Library.

Policy

East Gwillimbury Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service that meets the changing needs of all residents including persons with disabilities 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 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.

Scope

1. Feedback Process

The Library welcomes customer feedback and makes information on how to provide feedback available in accessible format. Staff assistance is available to support residents, including persons with disabilities, in providing feedback and when requested, the Library will make reasonable efforts to communicate with customers in a format of choice. Responses to customer feedback will be given in a timely manner, in accordance with the Library's *Communications Policy*.

2. Information and Communication

Library staff and volunteers will communicate with persons with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration.

East Gwillimbury Public Library will make every effort to keep its website, social media, and web content accessible.

3. Library Policies

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.

4. Requests for Accommodation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*

The Library will continue to meet the standards set by the Ontario Human Rights Code ("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. Accommodation will be provided unless the Library experiences "undue hardship" as defined in the Code.

5. Service Training for Staff and Volunteers and Documentation

The Library will provide ongoing training on how to provide customer service to persons with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training. Training will be provided to:

- a) those who participate in developing policies and procedures on the provision of service to the public
- b) anyone providing services to customers on behalf of the library

Directives

With the introduction of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations* (IASR), there is more than one Regulation to consider. Therefore the Directives include directions applicable to both Regulations.

1. Accessible Materials

East Gwillimbury Public Library maintains collections in a variety of formats from print to digital. The Library also provides access to additional accessible materials through its partnership with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

2. Assistive Devices

The Library recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to use personal assistive devices while accessing the Library in a safe and non-disruptive manner. The Library will make reasonable efforts to facilitate the use of assistive devices.

East Gwillimbury Public Library also provides adaptive technology for customers with disabilities. Library staff can provide basic instruction in the use of this technology, subject to staff availability.

3. Customer Service Training Information and Documentation

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 at no additional cost.

4. Emergency Plans

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

5. Employment

The Library will incorporate accessibility considerations into its recruitment and hiring practices and procedures, if requested.

The Library will build in accessibility needs into its human resources practices, policies and procedures including requests for accommodation.

6. Facilities

East Gwillimbury Public Library will maintain buildings that are fully wheelchair accessible and conform to all standards of the AODA. Any new facilities will take these requirements into account during the planning phase.

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

8. Provision of Services

In keeping with East Gwillimbury Public Library's strategic priority to provide welcoming, accessible library facilities, 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.
- where feasible provide self-service kiosks, including online catalogue, computer workstations, and self-check-out terminals, equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features

9. Service Animals

A person with a disability is welcome to visit the Library accompanied by a service animal. The Library will also provide alternative accommodation when a service animal is disallowed under the law. Persons training service animals are also welcome in the facility.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, Library staff may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status. It is the responsibility of the person with the service animal to ensure that it is kept in control at all times. The Library reserves the right to remove a Service Animal if the Service Animal behaviour presents a safety risk to staff and customers.

10. Support People

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

In many 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.

11. Temporary Service Disruptions

The Library will provide reasonable 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 in all possible channels.

Accountability

- The Chief Executive Officer and Managers are responsible for the implementation of this policy and for maintaining supporting documentation associated with the Act.
- East Gwillimbury Public Library is responsible for reporting to the Ministry of Community and Social Services on its compliance with the Act and its Standards through the Town of East Gwillimbury's Accessibility Plan.

References

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - O. Reg. 429/07*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - O. Reg. 191/11*

- Ontario *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER H.19*

The Library is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and will provide, upon request, alternate formats and communication supports, in compliance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

Approved Date: April 26, 2022	Motion #: 2022-36
Effective Date: April 26, 2022	

Appendix A

Definitions

"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.

"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, which prevents someone with a disability from participating fully in library programs or services because of their disability.

"Communication Support"

A tool or device that facilitates communication for a person with a disability, including but not limited to captioning, sign language, and personal listening systems.

"Disability"

As defined in the AODA, disability 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 condition of mental impairment or developmental disability, learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, 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*; ("handicap").

"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.