



Accessibility Policy

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1. Purpose

The Huntsville Public Library is committed to providing library services accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use library services. Library services will be relevant, inclusive and responsive to community needs. Each community member, including persons with disabilities, has an equal opportunity to use or be employed by the Huntsville Public Library. The Library will provide all services to respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The Library will strive to provide library services that meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities and in a way that is convenient and accessible to persons with disabilities. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Huntsville Public Library:

- Provides all library resources, services, and facilities in ways that are equally accessible to all community members.
- Will provide communication support and accessible formats. It will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable.
- Is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities promptly. When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- Will provide employment accommodation processes for library employees and job applicants in compliance with the Town of Huntsville Human Resources Policy. The Library will notify its employees and the public about accommodation availability for job applicants and employees with disabilities.
- Is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

This Policy applies to all persons who provide library services, including employees, volunteers and all other persons that offer goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Library.

Background Information

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed with the goal of creating standards for accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

The first standard to become law in Ontario was the Accessible Customer Service Regulation 429/07 which came into force on January 1, 2008; Library Boards are expected to comply by January 1, 2010.

2. Definitions

A.O.D.A.: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

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 Devices: any products, instruments, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities to help prevent, compensate, relieve or neutralize a disability. They may include Braille recorders, recording devices, Bliss symbolics boards, etc.

Barrier: anything preventing a person with a disability from fully participating in society because of their disability. Including physical barriers, architectural barriers, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Board: Huntsville Public Library Board

Communication Supports: 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:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, congenital disability or illness and, without limiting the generality of the preceding, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, 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 dog or other animal or a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental 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,

Kiosk: an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use to access one or more services or products or both.

Library Premises: means premises operated by the Huntsville Public Library.

Library Services: means what the Library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of core values and delivery promises including meeting community needs.

Planned Service Disruption: a scheduled shutdown or closure of a library facility, program or service, which may reduce or change a service level.

Service Animal: refers to an animal used by a person for reasons relating to their disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- the animal has identification as one that the person is using for reasons relating to the person's disability as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16

Support Person: is another person who accompanies them to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Town: Town of Huntsville

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

3. Policy

Accessibility Plan and Report

The Huntsville Public Library works with the Town of Huntsville to complete and submit a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Report. The report details strategies, initiatives and activities to reach the organization's goals of creating an accessible organization and delivering exceptional and accessible services. The document also reports on progress made during the year, including measures the Library has taken to identify, remove and prevent physical and attitudinal obstacles and promote the free movement of persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with regulations, standards or codes of practice. The report sets out measures and deliverables proposed for the year ahead. The library reviews will consider policies, procedures, and services accessible for persons with disabilities.

Consultation and Feedback

The Huntsville Public Library will consult with members of the public and community stakeholders when considering or reviewing customer service practices, service delivery channels, types of services and new buildings or renovations to the current structure. Public meetings for consultation will be advertised in advance and held in accessible locations, and the Library will provide accessibility services when requested in advance of the meeting. Additionally, the Huntsville Public Library will have a procedure for receiving and responding to feedback about how it provides library services to persons with disabilities. Such input from community members may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, electronic, or other methods.

Inquiries

Any inquiries related to this Policy or requests for documents related to this Policy may be directed to library employees at any public service point. Employees will respond as they are able and may refer the inquiry within the organization to the CEO/Chief Librarian.

Availability of Documents

This Policy and related procedures and forms and the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Report will be available on the Library's website. Additionally, the Library will provide a copy of this Policy and associated procedures and forms in an accessible format upon request. The Library will charge no fees for providing documents required by this Policy.

Assistive Devices

Persons with a disability may provide their assistive device to obtain or use library services. They may have free access to assistive devices available in the Library designed to help a person with a disability carry out activities or gain access to library services.

Exceptions may occur in situations where the Library has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or 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 them in obtaining and using library services where the Library has such other actions available. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that they safely operate their assistive device at all times.

Service Animals

A service animal may accompany persons entering Library facilities. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, Library employees may ask if service animal documentation is available. If documentation is not immediately available, the person and the animal, typically, will be allowed access to the Library for the current visit and asked to bring documentation for future visits.

Service animals are generally dogs but do include other animals. The service animal's owner's responsibility is to ensure that their service animal is under control.

Support Persons

Persons with a disability may enter Library premises with a support person to assist with communication, mobility or medical needs or with access to Library services and may have access to the support person while on the premises.

When assisting a person with a disability to obtain or use Library services, a support person will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable. Persons with disabilities may provide their library card or its duplicate fob to a support person for use by the support person on their behalf.

The Library may request a support person accompany a person with a disability while on premises. The Library will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs and consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence in making a request for a support person.

Information and Communication

The Library will provide access to or arrange for access to accessible materials and provide Library publicity and reports in alternate formats upon request. The Library will work to ensure the website and web content is accessible according to the appropriate Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. The Library complies with the Clear, Accessible and Large Print Guidelines developed by the CNIB.

Design of Public Spaces

The Library works closely with the Town of Huntsville to ensure our buildings provide a welcoming and supportive environment to serve all residents, including persons with disabilities. All Library construction projects, retrofits and redevelopments will comply with Ontario Building Code requirements and the AODA 2005 Design of Public Spaces Standards. In the event of a new construction or significant building renovations, the

Library will reduce barriers by ensuring accessible entrances, walkways, and parking and maintaining accessible library spaces, including service desks.

Temporary Service Disruptions

The Library will make a 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 any alternative facilities or services available. In the case of unplanned disruption, advance notice may not be possible.

Notice will be given to the public by posting the information at a conspicuous place on affected premises and by posting a notice on the Library website, and by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances. The Library will have a procedure document that sets out the steps to be taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, upon request, will give a copy of the document in an accessible format to any member of the public.

Procurement of Goods, Services, Facilities and Equipment

The Library will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. Working with the Town of Huntsville, accessibility considerations are outlined in the procurement documents. If it is not possible or practical to incorporate accessibility criteria and features, an explanation will be provided upon request.

Self-Service Kiosks

The Library shall have regard to the accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Employment

The Employment Standard builds upon the existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code concerning how to accommodate persons with disabilities throughout the job application process and the employment relationship. This standard applies to employees and does not apply to volunteers and non-paid individuals.

Recruitment

The Library shall notify employees and the public about accommodation availability for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. During a recruitment process, the Library shall notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request concerning materials or methods used. The Library shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability. The Library shall notify a successful applicant of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Employee Notification

The Library shall inform the employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations

that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. Information shall be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. Updated information shall be provided to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

When requested by an employee, the Library shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the employee's job; and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

4. Customer Service Standard and Training

The Library is committed to providing quality services accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use these services.

- Library service is relevant, inclusive and responsive for all, including persons with disabilities. Each community member has an equal opportunity to access public library services.
- Library services respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The Library strives to provide "universal access" to library services for all people through integration unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from library services.
- 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.

Training

The Library will provide:

- Training on the requirements of accessibility standards.
- The purpose of the Act.
- The Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.

The Library will provide such training to:

- All paid employees and volunteers;
- All persons who participate in developing library policies; and
- All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Library.

The training will also review the requirements of the Customer Service Standards and instruction on the following:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with a person with a disability/disabilities who uses:
 - An assistive device or requires the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the aid of a support person;
 - How to use equipment or devices available on the service provider's premises or otherwise provided by the service provider that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability;
 - How to assist a person with a particular type of disability who has difficulty accessing the Library's goods, services or facilities.

The Library will provide the specified training and information to each person to whom this policy applies as soon as is practicable, as well as on an ongoing basis concerning any changes to the Library's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods, services, and facilities to persons with disabilities.

A record of the training provided, the Library will maintain the training date and the recipients. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

5. Accessibility Services Feedback

To improve the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities, feedback from the public is welcome. To assist with collecting feedback, the Library will maintain a Feedback form (Appendix A) and accept comments in any form (in person, electronic format, written, etc.). The Library will log all such feedback, and The Library shall acknowledge all questions and concerns within a maximum of two (2) business days from the date of receipt. Response time to the feedback will depend on the issue but will not exceed fifteen (15) business days unless extenuating circumstances exist. The Library will provide the comments and concerns collected through the feedback process to the Huntsville Accessibility Advisory Committee (H.A.A.C) subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Information on the feedback process will be readily available to the public through postings on Library premises, the Virtual Library (huntsvillelibrary.ca) and other appropriate locations.

6. Related Documents

Clear, Accessible and Large Print Guidelines developed by the CNIB
Disruption of Accessible Service Procedures – March 2018
HPL Facilities Maintenance Capital Asset Plan
HPL IT Capital Asset Plan
Town of Huntsville Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
Town of Huntsville Procurement Bylaw Policy

History

Approved by the Huntsville Public Library Board June 14, 2022.