



Information Services Policy

Policy Number: 17-54

Policy Approval Date: Dec 28th, 2021

Policy Review Date: Dec 2025

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide the staff with a compendium of information that promotes a uniform standard of service of the highest possible quality consistent with available resources.

This policy for the provision of information service addresses such issues as:

- Definitions of information service
- Accessibility of information for persons with disabilities
- how information requests are triaged
- How the reference collection is maintained
- What statistics and other records are kept

Definitions in Information Services Policy

Accreditation: Achievement of conditions set by the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council. An information services policy is mandatory.

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

HPL: Huntsville Public Library

Information Services: Information services are defined as those services that connect people to the resources they require for education, recreation, and culture.

Interlibrary Loan (ILLO): the borrowing/lending of materials from/to other public libraries in the Province of Ontario.

Library: Huntsville Public Library

Technical Assistance: assistance with technologies, software and the Internet.

Philosophy

The Mission of Huntsville Public Library is *to provide accessible services, programs, collections and spaces designed to inspire and enrich the community.*

Information service at the Library is one of the most vital and visible expressions of the Library's purpose, mission, and is key to the Library's service roles: to serve as a hub for information, research, readers' advisory, education and technical assistance.

The Library is aware that more users are accessing the Library from home or office and it is imperative that reference services address this new trend. The Library's building will not be a boundary to its information services. The Library will explore means to offer service to information seekers at the place where they are when they have a question.

Accessibility

Staff will be trained to respond to customer service requests according to AODA legislation and its applicable Service standards that includes:

1. Review of the Library Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Policy (Motion 11-31 | June 15, 2011).
2. Introduction to Library technologies and software.

Reference Collection Development

1. The Library strives to maintain an up-to-date, relevant, and accessible working collection of reference materials (Circulating and non-circulating), relating primarily to community needs and interests.
2. The Library collection development plan includes guidelines for the building and weeding of the reference Materials (electronic and print).

Statistics & Other Records

1. To assess and evaluate information services, and to comply with the requirements of the Annual Survey of Public Libraries, statistics on reference questions will be kept for analysis.

Policy

1. All users seeking information assistance will be treated equally regardless of sex, age, ability and ethnicity.
2. The staff will respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information at all times.
3. The staff will answer all reference questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible and will be guided by the Board's policy on *Intellectual Freedom*. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.

4. Library Staff will assist and provide information, guide individuals, and refer individuals out within our community based on the information need of the individual.
5. The extent of individual service to each person will depend on the number of users needing to be served. The following priorities will apply.
 - 1st priority - requests presented in person
 - 2nd priority - requests presented by telephone/voice mail
 - 3rd priority - requests sent in by e-mail
 - 4th priority - requests received via the interlibrary loan network
 - 5th priority - requests received by mail
6. The Library is committed to meeting the needs of users with disabilities and learning challenges and will provide, upon request, alternate formats and communication supports.
7. Provision of Information Services follows the Federation of Canadian Library Associations (formerly CLA) *Statement on Intellectual Freedom* (Appendix A).

Related Documents

Accessible Standards for Customer Service Policy
Community Information Policy
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy - Town of Huntsville
Intellectual Freedom Policy
Interlibrary Loan Policy
Interlibrary Loan Procedures
Materials Selection Policy
Safety, Security and Emergency Policy
Technology @ HPL Policy

Policy History

Approved by the Board Dec 28th, 2021
Supersedes the policy approved June 12, 2017

Appendix A

Canadian Federation of Library Associations | Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Approval History: ~ June 27, 1974 Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination. Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

Ontario Library Association | Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) has also affirmed its support of the principle of intellectual freedom.

In affirming its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and the freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of the law, to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality.

That intellectual freedom requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, and including those ideas and interpretations that may be unconventional or unpopular.

That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.

That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.

That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in their selection of books, films, recordings, other materials, and in the provision of access to electronic sources of information, including access to the internet.

That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by an individual or group within the community it serves to abrogate or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view and listen by demanding the removal, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.

That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of materials is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but

determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

Approved by the Ontario Library Association, November 7, 1998.

Reaffirmed, OLA Board of Directors, December 2003

Reaffirmed, OLA Board of Directors, December 2005