

Topic: Accessibility in the Library

6.1 Accessibility in the Library Policy

Board Motion Number: **21.054**
Date of Original Board Motion Number: **December 21, 2009**
Date of Current Issue: **May 25, 2021**
Date of Next Review: **2025**
Attachments:

Signature of Board Chairperson (and Date):

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the North Kawartha Public Library meets the standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* and its regulations and provides accessible library services.

This policy also reflects the regulations set out in *Ontario Regulation 165/16*, a regulation passed in 2016 which replaced *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)* and specific sections of *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)*. As a result, this comprehensive policy on accessibility replaces *OP-03 Accessible Customer Service* and *OP 15 - Meeting the Requirements of the AODA Regulations*, both originally approved by the North Kawartha Public Library Board in 2011 and amended in 2016.

Statement of Organizational Commitment

The North Kawartha Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service. The Library will ensure that each employee, volunteer and patron receive equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required in a timely manner, and in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA* and its regulations.

The North Kawartha Public Library meets the obligations set out in the *AODA* and the current accompanying regulations, in partnership with the Municipality of North Kawartha.

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 devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks. Examples include Braille recorders, recording devices, magnifiers, and more.

A **“barrier”** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Communication supports” are tools or devices that facilitate communications for a person with a disability 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” 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 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*,

“Service animal” refers to an animal used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person 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 designated, regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability: (O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

“Support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, is another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Responsibilities

1. For the purposes of *AODA*, the library provides services on behalf of the municipality, and therefore is considered, along with the municipality, to be a “small designated public sector organization with at least one but fewer than 50 employees” as defined within the *O. Reg. 165/16*. The library complies with the obligations for this sector as set out in the *AODA* regulations.
2. The board ensures that the library complies with the spirit, principles and intent of *AODA* and designates the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as the individual accountable for the organization’s compliance with legislation.
3. The CEO will ensure that policies and procedures comply with the *AODA* and any regulations made under the *AODA*.

The Accessibility Plan

1. The library will work with the municipality to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the library’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers.
2. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
3. The plan is now in place and will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
4. The plan will be posted on the township’s website and a link will be provided from the library’s website. The plan can be provided in accessible formats upon request.

Policies and Procedures

1. In accordance with the *O. Reg 165/16*, relating to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*, the library has developed this present Accessibility in the Library policy which includes the required Customer Service elements and the library's other policies will support accessibility, in these specific areas:
 - a) the purchasing policy will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities;
 - b) the Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to the library's website;
 - c) the human resource policies will address training on *AODA* regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;
 - d) the collection development policy will address the availability of materials in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. print, audio, visual, digital, etc.).

Customer Service

The North Kawartha Public Library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community, and in the context of customer service will commit to the following.

1. The library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
 - a) encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our services and programs;
 - b) upon request, providing at least one computer workstation at each location which can be equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features;
 - c) arranging for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist which may include archival material and special collections;
 - d) maintaining a library website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level 2;
 - e) encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
 - f) waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification;
 - g) permitting service animals to assist users and provide alternative accommodation in situations where an animal is disallowed under the law.

2. The library will make every effort to communicate with users in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by providing:
 - a) this “Accessibility in the Library” policy in alternative formats upon request;
 - b) information on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and accessible services and programs;
 - c) reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and program for people with disabilities such as the library’s elevator;
 - d) a process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the library provides services to persons with disabilities.

3. The library will provide training to its board members, staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Communication

1. The library shall make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and make the public aware of the availability of communication support. In this context, the types of communications include:
 - a. policies,
 - b. accessibility plans,
 - c. emergency procedures, plan and public safety information prepared for the public,
 - d. forms, surveys and other tools used to gather feedback,
 - e. information on collections/materials in accessible format, and
 - f. employment standards.

2. Accessible formats of the library’s communications shall be made available:
 - a. in a timely manner,
 - b. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communications, and
 - c. in consultation with the person making the request.

Resources

Legislation:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11
Ontario Regulation 165/16 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11* and amending O Reg. 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)

Website: aoda.ca

Email: info@aoda.ca

Training: <http://www.accessforward.ca>

Link to Accessibility Plan on the Township Website:

<https://www.northkawartha.ca/en/our-services/accessibility-plan.aspx>