

Purpose and Scope

Burlington Public Library is committed to providing all members of the community, including those with disabilities, with equitable access to all programs, resources, and services.

Statement of Policy

BPL will comply with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR), to identify the way services will be provided in an accessible manner for people with disabilities.

In simple terms, accessibility means providing all people the opportunity to participate fully, regardless of their ability. Based on that core idea, BPL will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services, programs, resources, and spaces are accessible.

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:

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

Disability:

As defined in the AODA, disability means:

- a) 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, including 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;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- c) Learning disability, or a dysfunction in one of more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) Mental disorder; or,

e) 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.

Accessibility Plans

Burlington Public Library will assign a Staff Accessibility Coordinator to develop, monitor, and report on the library’s accessibility plan and its implementation to ensure compliance with AODA standards. An Accessibility Advisory Committee of informed staff members will update colleagues of best practices and changes to legislation affecting the library.

The library will make available to associated parties an information piece on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and the library’s accessibility policy and practices.

Communication

We will make every reasonable effort to communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that is appropriate to the person with a disability. Training will be provided to service staff on how to interact and communicate with our diverse user community and persons with various types of disabilities.

Policy documents will be available on the Library’s website. Policy documents will be provided, consistent with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Ontario Regulation 191-11.

Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from Library services. We will ensure that staff are trained in the use of the various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing materials or services.

Use of Service Animals

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, Library employees may ask if an animal is a service animal and whether documentation of the animal’s status is available. If documentation is not immediately available, the person and the animal, normally, will be allowed access to the library for the current visit and

asked to bring documentation for future visits. We will ensure that staff are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. Service animals are generally dogs but do include other animals. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their service animal does not disrupt others' enjoyment of the library space. In the event a staff member or another customer is allergic to animals, alternative arrangements will be negotiated.

Support Persons

Support persons, who assist a person with a disability are welcome in the Library to help with communication, mobility, medical need or other reason to facilitate use of the Library.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to use Library services, will be permitted to attend programs 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. When communicating personal or private information in the presence of the support worker, staff are required to get consent from the person with a disability.

The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises. Before making a decision to require a support person, the Library will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs, consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence and determine if there is any other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

Design of Public Spaces

Burlington Public Library will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring, or acquiring equipment and spaces. The Library will consult with individuals and organizations representing persons with disabilities when designing public spaces.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

Burlington Public Library will make reasonable effort to provide customers with notice in the event of planned or unplanned disruption of services used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Any service disruption signage and/or printed notices will follow accessible format: they will be clearly laid out, of sufficient size and easily readable. The signs and printed notices will be displayed prominently in the library.

Emergency Information

Burlington Public Library will provide publicly available emergency information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as practicable.

Training

Burlington Public Library will provide training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to employees, volunteers and others who provide library service or are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices, and procedures. Training content and format will be designed according to the level of interaction with customers. Training will be provided as part of orientation training for new employees and on a continuing basis as required. Training will include:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/08).
- Information about the Library's policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to the provision of Library services to users with disabilities.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing services or resources.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices available at each branch that may help with the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

Feedback Process

Comments on the provision of Library services are welcome and appreciated. Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. Feedback will be reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: References

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- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11:
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>
- O. Reg. 429/7: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/070429>
- O.Reg.191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR):
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r11191>
- Toronto Public Library Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy:
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/library-policies/accessibility-people-disabilities.jsp>
- Kitchener Public Library Accessibility Policy:
<https://www.kpl.org/your-library/accessibility/accessibilitypolicy.pdf>
- Hamilton Public Library Accessibility for Individuals with a Disability Policy:
<https://www.hpl.ca/articles/accessibility-individuals-disability>

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Associated Procedures: Human Rights and Respectful Workplace Policy