

Purpose

West Perth Public Library is committed to providing library services, resources and facilities in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities. This policy provides a framework for compliance with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and addresses specific areas required by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) associated with the AODA. This policy applies to all persons who provide library services including employees, volunteers and all other persons that provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Library.

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;
 - 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.

“Service Animals” and “Support Animals”

- ‘Service animals’ have certified training to perform specific tasks for people with disabilities. In compliance with the AODA’s Customer Service Standard, all service providers that operate premises open to the public, or to third parties that serve the public, must welcome service animals. Customers with disabilities may keep their service animals with them in all publicly accessible areas, except in places where the law excludes service animals. Service providers may ask for proof that an animal is a service animal;
- ‘Support animals’ provide emotional comfort and security, and do not have training for specific tasks. Support animals do not qualify as service animals under the AODA, and may be excluded from entering indoor public spaces at the discretion of the service provider.

Responsibility

West Perth Public Library is committed to providing library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use library services. Library services will be relevant, inclusive and responsive to community needs. Each member of the community, including persons with disabilities, has an equal opportunity to use and/or to be employed by West Perth Public Library. All library services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The Library will strive to provide services in a way that meets the specific needs of persons with disabilities and in a way that is convenient and accessible to persons with disabilities.

West Perth Public Library will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.

West Perth Public Library is committed to providing employment accommodation processes for Library employees and job applicants. The Library will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants and for employees with disabilities.

The Library will meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Communication

West Perth Public Library will make every reasonable effort to communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that is appropriate to the individual. Policy documents will be available on the Library's website. Policy documents will be provided, consistent with the requirements of the AODA, the Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Ontario Regulation 191-11.

Assistive Devices

Persons with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using library services and may have free access to assistive devices available in the Library designed to help a person with a disability to carry out activities or to 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 to 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 in obtaining and using library services, where the Library has such other measures available. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Service Animals

West Perth Public Library is 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 in service and whether documentation of the animal's status is available. If documentation is not immediately available, the person and the animal may be allowed access to the Library for the current visit and asked to bring documentation for future visits. It is the responsibility of the handler to ensure that their service animal stays with them, and is kept under control at all times. As a safety precaution, handlers will be asked to remove service animals causing disruptions or exhibiting concerning behaviours.

Handlers require permission from the Library CEO or designate to bring service animals-in-training into the Library.

Support animals are not permitted inside the library building, in accordance with AODA compliance requirements.

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 to a support person for use by the support person on their behalf. 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

West Perth 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

West Perth 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.

Emergency Information

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

Training

West Perth Public Library will provide training as required by the AODA 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 volunteers, and on a continuing basis as required.

Feedback Process

Comments on the provision of Library services are welcomed 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.

Related Documents:

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Collections*.
West Perth Public Library Policy. *Health and Safety*.
West Perth Public Library Policy. *Use of Technology*.

Government of Ontario. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
Government of Ontario. *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation*.
Government of Ontario. *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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