



Collingwood Public Library

Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP – 03**

Policy Title: **Accessibility for Users with Disabilities Policy**

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This policy addresses the requirements of Regulation 165/16 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* 2005. It was put in place to remove and prevent barriers to people living with disabilities. This policy is demonstrative of the Collingwood Public Library's goal to establish a fully accessible environment for everyone, including universal accessibility to library services, resources and facilities.

Scope

This policy applies to all Library Board members, employees, volunteers, and agents or contractors representing the Library and to the delivery of operations, services and programs provided by the Library.

Definitions:

"AODA" means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

"Accessible formats" as defined by the AODA Ontario Regulation 191/11, are formats including large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities. Other ways to make information accessible include communication support (i.e. reading something aloud) and using written notes.

"Assistive Device" means a device used to assist people living with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing Library services.

"Barrier" means anything that prevents a person living with a disability from participating in all of the services and programs offered at the Library, because of his or her disability. This includes a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, and a policy or practice.



“Disability or disabilities” as defined by the AODA, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code, is:

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impairment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other 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, 1997.

“Library Service” refers to the program the Library offers to the public in an effort to meet a defined set of community needs.

“Public Spaces” means indoor and outdoor paths of travel such as paths and sidewalks, accessible off-street parking, service-related elements such as lowered service counters and work stations.

“Service Animal” means any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons related to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

“Support Person” as defined by the AODA, 2005, means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to Library services or facilities.

“Reasonable Effort” means to provide the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of people living with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers to access, the health and safety of Library staff and volunteers, the security of Library property and existing laws and contracts.



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

Statement of Commitment

The Collingwood Public Library values the independence and integrity of all who live, learn, work, volunteer, play, and invest in our community. We are committed to meeting the Library’s accessibility and customer service standards under the *AODA* by evaluating the accessibility of the Library’s public spaces, providing accessibility training to our staff and volunteers, and offering a variety of assistive services.

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

Section 1: Access to Public Spaces

The Collingwood Public Library is committed to meeting its obligations under Section 2 of the *AODA* Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces by providing:

- a) Universal access to Library space(s).
- b) Reasonable effort to provide notice of planned or unplanned disruption of Library services to the public. In the case of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible.
- c) A Barrier Identification Form to help identify and remove barriers at the Library. This form is available in accessible formats upon request at the Public Services Desk.

Section 2: Responsibilities

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.

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.

Section 3: Information and Communications

- 3.1. The Collingwood Public Library is committed to meeting the communication needs of people living with disabilities and will make every reasonable effort to ensure services and programs are created and revised with accessibility in mind. When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s abilities.



- 3.2. A person with a licensed service animal is welcome to visit the Library.
- 3.3. A person training a service animal is welcome to use the Library as a training exercise for the animal.
- 3.4. If it is not apparent that an animal is a service animal, a Library employee may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status by asking to see a letter from a physician, nurse, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 3.5. It is the responsibility of the person with the service animal to ensure that it is controlled at all times.
- 3.6. A support person, when assisting a person with a disability in the enjoyment of Library programs and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.
- 3.7. The use of a personal assistive device for the purpose of accessing Library services and programs is allowed and encouraged, provided that the device is operated in a safe manner.
- 3.8. The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Library premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the Library premises.
- 3.9. Public sector organizations are required to make their websites and website content comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) and Ontario Regulation 191/11. The Library will conduct an annual assessment of its website for compliance and will remove and modify inaccessible content.

Section 4: Notice of Service Disruptions

The Collingwood Public Library will make reasonable effort to provide notice of planned or unplanned service disruptions. In the case of an unplanned disruption, advance notice will not be possible. Notice will be given to the public through signage on our premises and/or by posting notice on the Library website, and/or social media channels. If the disruption will last more than a few hours, the Library uses the Town's outlets to communicate service barriers.



Section 5: Training

The Collingwood Public Library is committed to excellent customer service. The Library provides training on how to effectively communicate with people of different abilities, to:

- a) Those who develop policies and procedures on the provision of service to the public
- b) Those who deal with the public on behalf of the Library.

Board members, staff, volunteers, and all others who deal with the public on behalf of the Library, will receive online training offered by the Town of Collingwood. Training will be required again if changes have been made to relevant legislation or if new training or refresher training courses are requested.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 165/16, the Library shall keep records of the training provided to Board members, staff, volunteers, and all others who deal with the public on behalf of the Library. All personnel records are kept for a period of three (3) years from the date of departure.

Section 6: Feedback on Services

Feedback regarding the provisions of Library materials, programs, and services may be communicated through the submission of a Customer Service Feedback Form and/or a Barrier Identification Form, available at the Public Services Desk or on our website. These forms are reviewed by the Coordinator, Community Engagement and Learning Services, as well as the CEO.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of services to people living with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in an electronic format or through other methods.

Section 7: The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

- 7.1. The Collingwood Public Library will establish, implement, and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan which will outline the Library's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. This plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
- 7.2. The process of developing the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be done in consultation with people living with disabilities.
- 7.3. The Plan will be posted on the Library's website and will be provided in an accessible format upon request. Library staff can also assist patrons with reading the Plan.



Section 8: Availability of Documents

This policy will be updated and reviewed by the Collingwood Public Library Board annually. It is available on the Library's website and in accessible formats upon request.

The Library shall make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities in a timely manner 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.

Related Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (AODA)
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11
- Ontario Regulation 165/16 – Integrated Accessibility Standards
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
- Barrier Identification Form
- Collingwood Public Library Accessibility Plan