



## **Accessibility in the Library**

### **Policy Statement**

The Guelph Public Library is committed to accessibility by providing accessible and equitable access to facilities, programs, and services, removing existing barriers for persons with both visible and non-visible disabilities, and providing information and training to create an environment of inclusion within the Library.

This policy provides a framework for compliance with the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (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.

### **1 Definitions**

Disability, according to the AODA includes:

- 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, 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,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a 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")

## **2 Organizational Commitment**

The Library Board gives authority to the CEO to ensure that Guelph Public Library does not operate without a statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. The CEO is also responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures comply with the AODA and that all employees, volunteers and third parties providing goods, services or facilities on Guelph Public Library's behalf receive training on the requirements of the IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code.

## **3 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

For the purposes of compliance with the AODA, the Guelph Public Library is a "large designated public sector organization". Under the AODA, large designated public sector organizations must prepare multi-year accessibility plans to identify which of the actions the organization has accomplished in the past year as well as plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities going forward. The City of Guelph includes Guelph Public Library in their multi-year accessibility plan.

## **4 Programs**

Guelph Public Library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that programs are accessible by:

- a. Encouraging the use of personal assistive devices.
- b. Permitting service animals to assist clients and provide alternative accommodations when the animal is disallowed under the law.
- c. Encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities by waiving fees if applicable. If it is deemed necessary that support persons will be required to pay admittance charges, advance notification of this fact must be made available.
- d. If crowds are large, individuals in wheelchairs or using walkers or other assistive devices (and their support persons or service animal if applicable) will be admitted first.

## **5 Communication**

Guelph Public Library will make every effort to communicate with patrons in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by:

- a. Providing reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities.
- b. Providing and publicizing this policy and making it available in alternative formats when requested.
- c. Providing a feedback, response, and tasking process that enables increased integration and the accessibility of Guelph Public Library's collections and services.
- d. Providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities when requested and in a timely manner that considers the person's accessibility needs due to disability. Guelph Public Library will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

## **6 Training**

- 6.1 Training will be provided specifically in the development of the policies, practices and procedures as required in the AODA Customer Service Standards.
- 6.2 Training will be provided in the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and the library's accessible services and programs.
- 6.3 Guelph Public Library will maintain records of staff trained in the Customer Service Standards and will ensure that the Accessible Customer Service Standards training is integrated into the orientation program for all new employees.

## **7 Accessible Services and Collections**

Guelph Public Library offers a variety of services and collections that are particularly relevant to the needs of patrons with disabilities.

### 7.1 Library collections include:

- a) Audiobooks
- b) Closed captioned DVDs
- c) Large Print Books
- d) DAISY players and DAISY format audiobooks
- e) eBooks and eAudiobooks
- f) Braille Books (Children's Services only)

### 7.2 Visiting Library Services

Patrons with special needs or who are unable to visit the library are encouraged to register with the library's Outreach Services department. Library staff will

assemble library materials of interest to the patron in question. These items can then be delivered to the patron by a family member or a library-assigned volunteer.

### 7.3 Shut-in/Outreach Services Accessibility accounts

Individuals who make use of the services offered through Visiting Library Services are exempt from paying fines associated with overdue items.

### 7.4 Bookmobile

The Bookmobile makes regularly scheduled stops throughout the city including those at Senior's residences.

### 7.5 Accessible Computers

Screen magnification, text narration, and an on-screen keyboard are available on all public computers. There is a large-print keyboard and trackball mouse available for use at each library location.

### 7.6 Communication Supports/Assistive Devices

Guelph Public Library will make reasonable efforts to facilitate the use of assistive devices that enable persons with disabilities to use library services when required. Guelph Public Library offers a broad range of assistive devices including communication supports to help meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

## **8 Service Animals**

Service animals are welcomed at all library locations.

## **9 General Operations**

9.1 Staff should ensure that access to Guelph Public Library entrances are free of snow, ice or other obstructions and should contact their supervisor or the administrative assistant if clearing is required.

9.2 Accessible parking spaces should also be kept clear of snow and ice.

9.3 Central Library staff should ensure that the elevator is in working order.

9.4 Upon opening the doors to the public, staff should check that the automated doors are operational and should report any problems to their supervisor.

## **10 Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

10.1 The public should be notified should any of the following services become unavailable.

- a. Accessible Washrooms

- b. Elevator
- c. Automatic Door Openers
- d. Accessible Parking Spot
- e. Wheelchair Access PAC terminals
- f. Visual Magnification/Sight Enhancement software

10.2 Signage should be placed at the entrance to the building as well as at the actual point of service. An email should be sent to inform Communications staff that an update to the website is required. Signage and web site announcements should include the expected length of the disruption and any alternative facilities or services that may be available.

10.3 Bookmobile staff are responsible for the following procedures when they are unable to make their scheduled stops:

- a. Notify contacts at each affected stop. Senior residences will generally make an announcement in house to ensure that patrons are not waiting for us.
- b. Send an email to all staff informing them of the service disruption.
- c. Send an email to Communications staff to request an online announcement.
- d. Call any patrons that have items on hold.

## **11 Emergency Procedures**

In case of fire or other emergency, library staff will ensure that all library patrons have evacuated the building. Special care will be taken to assist patrons with disabilities to safely exit the premises.

### 11.1 Wheelchair or Walker Assisted

- a. Accompany the customer to exit or delegate someone to do so.
- b. Enter a stairwell exit only when crowd has thinned.
- c. Consult with customer for best method of assistance.

### 11.2 Visually Impaired

- a. Accompany customer to exit, offering your arm to guide the person.
- b. If there is a guide dog, let the dog follow or ask the customer to bring it on the leash.
- c. Enter a stairwell exit when crowd has thinned.
- d. Accompany the customer to a place of safety.

### 11.3 Hearing Impaired

- a. Communicate the need to evacuate the building by speaking slowly, writing a note or using sign language.
- b. Accompany the customer to a place of safety.
- c. Be sure to check isolated areas.

## **12 Self Service Kiosk**

Guelph Public Library will incorporate accessibility features and criteria when designing, procuring, or acquiring self service kiosks.

## **13 Feedback Process**

Feedback from patrons is welcomed and encouraged.

- a. In person
- b. By email – askus@guelphpl.ca
- c. By telephone – 519-824-6220
- d. Alternate formats are also available upon request by submitting the Alternative Format and Communication Support Request Form

## **14 Related Policies**

Accessibility and Staff