

Peterborough Public Library

Accessible Service Policy



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1. Purpose

To provide a framework to inform the Peterborough Public Library's delivery of accessible services to all individuals who visit Library facilities. The Library upholds equitable access to services and maintains a welcoming and supportive environment based on access and inclusiveness. The Library is committed to using its services to provide all individuals, including those with disabilities, an equal opportunity to effectively use the Library in an independent and dignified manner.

2. Policy Objectives

The Peterborough Public Library's Accessible Service Policy outlines accessible customer service standards for community members with disabilities. This policy aims to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers and integrate accessible services in accordance with the Accessibility for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), and the City of Peterborough's Integrated Accessibility Standards and Accessible Customer Service policies and procedures.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Accessible:** Giving people of all abilities the opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from the Library's goods, services, information, and spaces in a way that is free from barriers.
- 3.2. AODA:** Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11
- 3.3. Assistive Devices:** Tools such as wheelchairs, canes, hearing devices, or screen readers are used to support a person's mobility, vision, or communication. Devices can also include, but are not limited to, service animals, hearing assistance devices, and personal oxygen tanks.
- 3.4. Barrier:** Anything that hinders or prevents a person with a disability from fully and equally participating. This may be physical, architectural, informational, communicational, technological, attitudinal, or related to policies or practices.

3.5. City: Corporation of the City of Peterborough

3.6. Director / CEO: Peterborough Public Library Director / Chief Executive Officer

3.7. Disability: as per the AODA, sec. 2, “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, 1997.
- This definition includes disabilities of different severities, visible as well as invisible disabilities, and disabilities for which the effects may come and go.

3.8. Employee: Any full-time and part-time individuals hired by the City to work in the Library, including all contract, temporary, student, secondment, or co-operative placement persons

3.9. Emotional Support Animal: An animal that supports a person with a disability. It should be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, or the person should be able to provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. Regulated health professionals include:

- A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
- A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16

- 3.10. Library:** Peterborough Public Library
- 3.11. Library Leadership Team:** Library supervisors and management
- 3.12. Multiple Formats:** A form of communicating information that may be oral, written, in sign language, recorded, through computer technology, or other means that are readily understandable to, and usable by a person, regardless of their disability.
- 3.13. MLCC Branch:** The Library branch located in the Miskin Law Community Complex, 271 Lansdowne St. W., Peterborough, ON K9J 1Y8
- 3.14. Main Library:** Also known as the downtown Library branch located at 345 Aylmer St. N., Peterborough, ON K9H 3V7
- 3.15. Member:** A general member of the public, or visitor, who uses the Library's services. A member may or may not have a registered library card.
- 3.16. ODA:** Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.32
- 3.17. Reasonable Efforts:** Striving to provide the best possible service within the context of available resources, balancing the needs of people with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers with the community at large, the health and safety of Library employees and volunteers, the security of Library property, and existing laws and contracts.
- 3.18. Service Animal:** A certified animal that supports a person with a disability. It should be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, or the person should be able to provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. See **3.9 Emotional Support Animals** for a list of regulated health professionals.
- 3.19. Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, a support person is someone who accompanies them to assist with communication, mobility, accessibility, daily living needs, or medical needs. A support person can be a paid personal support worker (PSW), a volunteer, a family member, or a friend.
- 3.20. Third Party:** An individual or group who is not a member of the public or service user. A third party may be a volunteer, a temporary support staff, a technician, a business associate and/or any other stakeholder who is not a Library employee or member.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of the Library's operations, including its services, facilities, information and communications, technology, and employment opportunities. It further applies to employees, volunteers, and any third parties providing goods, services, products, or facilities on the Library's behalf to the public.

5. Procedures

The Library strives to remove barriers from all areas of operations.

5.1. Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

The Library welcomes people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a service animal or an emotional support animal except where excluded by applicable law. Where a service animal or emotional support animal is excluded by law, the Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure access to Library services are provided by alternative means.

Service animals and emotional support animals are not pets. When a person with a service animal or an emotional support animal enters the Library facility, employees will not give the animal any form of attention including, but not limited to, touching, talking, and feeding.

A member who is accompanied by a service animal or an emotional support animal shall be considerate of the health and safety of themselves and others.

The member is responsible for the behaviour of the service animal while in the Library. If the member is not in control of their service animal, employees can ask the member to leave until the service animal is under control, at which point, they are welcome back in the facility.

If an emotional support animal's behaviour is repeatedly aggressive and there is no reasonable effort to control the animal, the Library has the right to ask the member to leave and not bring the animal back.

To promote inclusivity and accessibility, the Library's stance is to permit emotional support animals, assuming the member has acceptable documentation, until there is a reason not to, e.g. excluded by law, or exhibiting repeated, aggressive behaviour.

5.2. Support Person

The Library permits people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a support person. The Library will not prevent any person with a disability from having full access to their support person while they are in the Library.

The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of other persons in the Library. The Library will not make such a

requirement without consulting the person with the disability and only after considering the following:

- When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or other persons in the Library;
- That risk is greater than the risk associated with other members;
- That any potential risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable efforts;
- The assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and,
- The assessment of the risk is based upon the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance, or fears about a disability.

The Library will waive program fees, when practicable, for support persons assisting members.

5.3. Disruption of Library Services

In the event of a disruption to Library services that negatively impacts the ability of persons with disabilities to use or benefit from the Library's services, the Library will provide notice of the disruption to the public. Planned disruptions will be advertised with reasonable advanced notice.

5.4. Personal Assistive Devices

The Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure that people with disabilities are able to use their personal assistive devices in Library facilities unless otherwise prohibited by law.

5.5. Facility

Library facilities are accessible to people using mobility assistance devices, wheelchairs, scooters, or walkers as follows:

- Accessible parking spots close to entrances at both branches.
- Main entrances are at street level at both branches.
- Ramp access at the side entrance of the Main Library with access to a return drop box.
- Exterior return box at the MLCC branch is at street level.
- Automatic doors at both branch entrances.

- Furniture and shelving in both branches are spaced to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters.
- An elevator is available at both branches. The Main Library has a second elevator located at the back of the facility.
- Accessible washrooms at both branch locations with washroom fittings at appropriate heights for members using a wheelchair or scooter; safety alarms in case of emergency; and sinks and dryers are equipped with hands free technology to facilitate ease of use.
- Service desks at both branches have lower service points allowing wheelchair and/or scooter access.
- Stairs and ramps with visible and/or physical markers.

5.6. Emergency Procedures, Plans, and Safety Information

The Library will provide its emergency procedures plans, and health and safety information, that it makes available to the public, to persons with disabilities in an accessible format or with an appropriate communication support upon request.

5.7. Collections

The Library's collections include multiple formats to support accessible requests including:

- Large print books.
- Audiobooks in CD or Playaway format.
- Online accessible content, such as electronic databases, eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers, magazines, and movies available for download to mobile devices, eReaders, and computers.
- Access to the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) collection in multiple accessible formats.
- DAISY Readers, enhanced CD players enabling members with a reading disability to access our audiobook on CD collection.
- Envoy Connect audiobook players, pre-loaded with titles from the CELA collection.
- Decodable books for people with learning disabilities.
- Braille collection for people with a visual impairment.
- Read-Alongs in print and audiobook.
- French print books with CD audio.
- DVDs with closed captioning and described video, when available.

- Visiting Library Service which delivers materials to members who are temporarily, or permanently, homebound as part of the Visiting Library Service.

5.8. Equipment

The Library offers the following equipment to help deliver accessible services:

- Hearing Loop T-mode device available at the MLCC branch.
- Assisted listening devices available in room rentals.
- Portable, handheld magnifier to assist with reading spine labels or small amounts of text.
- Smartview HumanWare text magnifier.
- Computers with NVDA Mosaic screen readers installed with options to display enlarged text, and high contrast or reversed colour palettes.
- A dedicated accessible computer with a large print keyboard and extra-large display at the Main Library.

5.9. Training

- 5.9.1.** All Library employees and volunteers who offer customer service to members of the public or other third parties will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.
- 5.9.2.** All persons who participate in the development of the Library's policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to members of the public or other third parties will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.
- 5.9.3.** Training will be included in employee and volunteer onboarding as part of the orientation process. Training modules are made available through the City and include:
- General Requirements, Understanding AODA and Beyond
 - Ontario Human Rights Code, as it Relates to Disability
 - Customer Services Standards, Delivering Excellence for Everyone
 - Employment Standards, Your Role in an Inclusive Workplace
 - Information and Communication Standards, Bridging the Gap for Everyone

Library specific training includes:

- Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at the Library that may help people with disabilities access the Library's services.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Library's services.

The City will provide a certificate of completion for each training module to employees and volunteers. Employees and volunteers are responsible for sending their certificates of completion to the Library Leadership Team.

All existing employees will receive the appropriate training on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

It will be the responsibility of the Director / CEO, or their designate, to ensure that Library employees and volunteers receive the necessary training regarding the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

The Director / CEO, or their designate, will ensure that training records are maintained for Library employees and volunteers. Records will be updated by the Director / CEO, or their designate, each time an employee receives additional training.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1.** The Peterborough Public Library Board is responsible for approving this policy.
- 6.2.** The Director / CEO is responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 6.3.** The Library Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring employees and volunteers have received training and are applying the policy equitably.
- 6.4.** Employees and volunteers are responsible for applying the policy.

7. Privacy and Confidentiality

The Library protects the privacy and confidentiality of all members personal information in keeping with the access to information and privacy provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 (MFIPPA) and other applicable legislation.

The Library collects personal information of library members under the authority of section 23(4) of the Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.44, and personal information will only be used to administer services and programs at the Library.

8. Communications

This policy will be distributed on the Library's [website](#), and made available, upon request, to any member of the public, in multiple formats suitable to the requestor.

8.1. Feedback

The Library follows a process for receiving and responding to feedback in a timely manner about how it provides services to persons with disabilities.

Members are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the Library's provision of services to people with disabilities.

Feedback can be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by email.

All feedback received will be directed to the Director / CEO, or designate, for review.

Upon review, the Director / CEO, or designate, will determine if any further action is required. Further actions could include, but is not limited to, the purchase of assistive equipment, a change in the Library's policies, procedures, or practices, or additional training.

The Director / CEO, or designate, will respond to feedback, providing the member has left their name and contact information, informing the member of the action(s) taken. The response will be delivered using the communication method desired by the member.

9. Inquiries

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the Library Services Manager.

10. Related Documents

10.1. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11

10.2. Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.32

10.3. City of Peterborough, Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

10.4. City of Peterborough, Accessible Customer Service Policy

10.5. City of Peterborough, Accessibility Procedures