

Category: Legal
Policy Number: 5.6
Policy Name: Accessibility

Purpose:

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* imposes a legal duty on organizations to achieve accessibility. The *Act* lays the framework for the development of province-wide regulations on accessibility, which, at present, are the *Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* and *Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*. The Waterloo Public Library meets the obligations set out in the *Act* and the accompanying regulations, in partnership with the Municipality of Waterloo.

Statement of Organizational Commitment to meet accessibility needs of persons with disabilities:

The Waterloo Public Library establishes policies, practices and procedures that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities will benefit from opportunities for involvement with, and service of, the Library afforded to all others. Where barriers exist, accommodation will be provided in consultation with the individual to provide dignified, independent, and equal opportunity or an alternative that is as close as possible, in a timely manner.

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 “large designated public sector organization with greater than 50 employees” as defined within the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*. The Library complies with the obligations for this sector as set out in the *AODA* regulations.

The Library 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.

The CEO will ensure that policies and procedures comply with the *AODA* and any regulations made under the *AODA*.

The Accessibility Plan:

The Library will work with the municipality to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which will outline the Library’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers.

The process of developing the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.

The plan will be in place by January 2014, and reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The plan will be posted on the Library’s website and be provided in accessible format upon request.

Policies and Procedures:

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The Library's policies will incorporate practices which support accessibility. In accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standard Ontario Regulation 191/11* of the AODA, accessibility will be addressed in four main areas:

- Purchasing policies will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities
- Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to the Library's website
- Human resource policies will address training on AODA regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for applicants, support for employees, accommodation plans, and career development and advancement.
- Collection development policies will address the availability of materials in accessible formats

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07* of AODA, the Library maintains a policy on accessible customer service.

Communication:

The Library shall make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and make public aware of the availability of communication support. In this context, the types of communications include:

- Policies
- Accessibility plans
- Emergency procedures, plan and public safety information prepared for the public
- Forms, surveys and other tools used to gather feedback
- Information on collections/materials in accessible format
- Information required to apply for and perform one's job and other information provided to all employees

Accessible formats of the Library's communications shall be made available:

- In a timely manner
- At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communications
- In consultation with the person making the request

The Library's web site, intranet and web content will conform to WCAG 2.0 within the designated schedule.

Reg. 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Section 19 – Public Libraries:

As a public library board, the Library will provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist.

The Library shall make information about the availability of accessible materials publicly available and shall provide the information in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

The Library may provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections, rare books and donations.

Employment:

The Library is committed to ensure that all phases of the employment process encourages a person with disabilities to succeed. These phases are: recruitment, hiring, training, performance management and

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professional development. Accommodation during any of the listed phases is available, upon request. The person with the disability will be consulted when completing the accommodation plan based on his or her needs. Individual accommodation plans for employees are developed collaboratively between Human Resources and the individual and the medical professional (if required).

Design of Public Spaces:

When building new facilities or completing significant renewal of exterior paths of travel, the Library will ensure that specifications in this regulation and the *Building Code Act of Ontario* are followed.

When building new parking lots or renovating parking lots, the proper spacing and number of spaces will be in accordance to the Regulation.

Service counters are designed to accommodate customers using mobility aids. All items have been designed to service all customers of the Library, including those with disabilities.

Collections are placed in a manner to accommodate access to people with disabilities. Staff training includes the need to assist customers with accessing the collection.

Document Record:

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September 2013	Reviewed
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