

TEMISKAMING SHORES PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY

SUBJECT: Accessibility in the Library
REVIEW DATE: October 30, 2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 3rd quarter 2025

POLICY NO: Access-1
MOTION NO: 2024-41

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Temiskaming Shores Public Library meets the standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* and its regulations and provides accessible library services.

This policy also reflects the regulations set out in *Ontario Regulation 165/16*, a regulation passed in 2016 which replaced *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)* and specific sections of *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)*. As a result, this comprehensive policy on accessibility replaces PER-25 Accessible Customer Service, last reviewed by the Temiskaming Shores Library Board in 2018.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Temiskaming Shores Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service. The Library will ensure that each employee, volunteer and patron receive equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required in a timely manner, and in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA* and its regulations.

The Temiskaming Shores Public Library meets the obligations set out in the *AODA* and the current accompanying regulations, in partnership with the Municipality of the City of Temiskaming Shores.

Section 2: 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**” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enable a person with a disability to do everyday tasks. Examples include Braille recorders, recording devices, magnifiers, and more.

A “**barrier**” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Communication supports” are tools or devices that facilitate communications for a person with a disability and may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

"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*,

“Service animal” refers to an animal used by a person for reasons relating to their disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- the person provides documentation from one of designated, regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability: (O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

“Support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Section 3: Responsibilities

1. For the purposes of *AODA*, the library provides services on behalf of the municipality, and therefore is considered 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.
2. 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.

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

Section 4: The Accessibility Plan

1. The library will work with the municipality to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the library's strategy to prevent and remove barriers.
2. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
3. The plan is now in place and will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
4. The plan will be posted on the library's website and be provided in accessible formats upon request.

Section 5: Policies and Procedures

1. In accordance with the *O. Reg 165/16*, relating to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*, the library has developed this present Accessibility in the Library policy which includes the required Customer Service elements and the library's other policies will support accessibility, in these specific areas:
 - a) the purchasing policy will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities;
 - b) the Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to the library's website;
 - c) the personnel policies will address training on *AODA* regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;
 - d) the collection development policy will address the availability of materials in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. print, audio, visual, digital, etc.).

Section 6: Customer Service

The Temiskaming Shores Public Library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community, and in the context of customer service will commit to the following.

1. The library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
 - a) encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our services and programs;
 - b) arranging for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist;
 - c) providing a library website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level 2;
 - d) encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
 - e) permitting service animals to assist users and provide alternative accommodation in situations where an animal is disallowed under the law.
2. The library will make every effort to communicate with users in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by providing:
 - a) this “Accessibility in the Library” policy in alternative formats upon request;
 - b) information on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and accessible services and programs;
 - c) reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities such as the library’s elevator;
 - d) a process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the library provides services to persons with disabilities.
3. The library will provide training to its staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Section 7: Communication

1. The library shall make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities 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, and
 - e. information on collections/materials in accessible format.
2. Accessible formats of the library’s communications shall be made available:
 - a. in a timely manner,
 - b. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the

- communications, and
- c. in consultation with the person making the request.

Section 8: Feedback process

The Temiskaming Shores Public Library is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format, online, or through any other methods that addresses the needs of the person providing feedback.

Feedback may be received by any person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Library, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise and any person who participates in developing the Library's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties. The feedback form shall be forwarded to the Library CEO's office for reporting and follow-up purposes.

If the Patron chose to supply their contact information, a response to the feedback shall be provided by the Library CEO within 30 days of receipt of the feedback by the Library.

Please see the sample Customer Satisfaction Feedback Form attached to this Policy

Complaints from a patron about service from an employee will be addressed in the following way:

1. In the first step, individuals can report to the Library CEO verbally, in writing or in another method of communication that takes into account the individual's disability the details of their complaint. The CEO then will investigate the incident and decide upon a course of action.
2. In the second step the CEO notifies, in an appropriate method of communication, both the individual and the employee involved of the course of action. If the individual is satisfied with the course of action, the action is carried out.
3. If not, in the third step the individual may notify the Library Board of the complaint in an appropriate method of communication, and subsequently meet with the Library Board during a closed session of a regularly scheduled board meeting to discuss the complaint.

Access-1

Related Documents:

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

Ontario Regulation 165/16 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11* and amending O Reg. 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)

(October 30, 2024)