

<b>POLICY MANUAL</b>	<b>Section No. :</b> PS – 7 – 7.1
	<b>Effective :</b> September 21, 2009
<b>SECTION :</b> Public Services	<b>Revised :</b> April 28, 2014
<b>SUBJECT :</b> Accessibility Policy	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Library:

- Provides all library services, resources and facilities in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and is consistent with the City of Welland Accessible Customer Service Policy.

## **Guiding Principles**

- Library service is relevant, inclusive and responsive for all, including persons with disabilities. Each member of the community has an equal opportunity to access public library services.
- The Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The Library strives to provide “universal access” to Library services for all people to the greatest extent possible with the need for adaptation or specialized design in order to integrate services to persons with disabilities. The Library will offer alternative measures, including trained staff support, where necessary, so that persons with disabilities may obtain and use library services.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to members of the public and all persons who are:

- Library employees, Board members and volunteers
- Students on placement; and
- Third parties who provide service on the Library’s behalf (i.e. programs)

## **Customer Service Standards**

### **Policy Statement**

The Welland Public Library is committed to providing Library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use Library services. This commitment extends to visitors and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities.

### **Communications with Persons with Disabilities**

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

### **Temporary Service Disruptions**

The Library will make reasonable effort to provide notice of planned or unplanned disruption of Library services to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its

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anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or service, if any, that may be available. In the case of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible.

### **Assistive Devices and Other Measures that Assist with Accessibility**

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using Library services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Library has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or to the health and safety of others on Library premises. In these situations, the Library may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using Library services, where the Library has such other measures available.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

### **Service Animals and Guide Dogs**

Persons with a disability may enter Library premises accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them, unless the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Library will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Library services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal or a guide dog, Library staff may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal or guide dog is kept in control at all times.

### **Support Persons**

A person with a disability may enter Library premises with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

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.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain or use Library services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

### **Training**

The Library will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training will be dependent on a person's interactions with Library users.

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The content of the training will include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and instruction about the following matters:
  - A review of the purpose of the AODA
  - A review of the Library’s Customer Service Accessibility Policy.
  - The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
  - Instructions on Library policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to the provision of Library services to users with disabilities
  - How to interact and communicate with users with various types of disabilities
  - What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Library services
  - How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal
  - How to use equipment or devices available on Library premises that may help with the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities

A record of training provided to persons to whom this act applies on the AODA and this policy will be kept by the C.E.O. Training will be provided as part of orientation training for new employees, volunteers or third party, and on a continuing basis as required.

### **Feedback on Services**

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of services may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. The Welland Public Library will respond to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to the public.

### **Integrated Accessibility Regulation, 191/11**

The Welland Public Library is committed to ensuring that compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulation is achieved according to the effective dates indicated in the legislation.

### **The Accessibility Plan**

The Library will work with the City of Welland 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 reviewed and updated every five years. A copy of the Plan will be posted on the Library’s website and be provided in accessible format upon request.

### **Information and Communications**

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the Welland Public Library shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide

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accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. In this context, 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
- f) Employment standards

The Library purchases accessible materials in a variety of formats for the use of all patrons in accordance with the Collections Management Policy.

### **Procurement of Goods and Services and Facilities**

When procuring goods, services or facilities, the Library shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the Library shall provide an explanation, upon request.

### **Accessible Websites and Web Content**

The Library will work toward making its website and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0, initially at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards

### **Employment Standards**

- a) The Library is committed to ensuring that at all phases of the employment process: recruitment, hiring, training and performance management, a person with disabilities has the opportunity to succeed. Accommodation during any of those processes is available upon request. The person with a disability will be consulted as to the most appropriate accommodation based on his/her needs. Notification of accommodation is provided at all points of access.

Policies, guidelines, procedures, job aids and other information required for an employee's success is made available in accessible formats, upon request.

- b) An individual may require an accommodation related to his/her disability or may be returning to work experiencing a disability. Accommodation Plans for individual employees are developed collaboratively between Management and the individual and, as required, a healthcare professional.
- c) Safety and emergency information is provided in the format required by an employee's disability as part of the orientation process.