

<b><i>POLICY MANUAL</i></b>	<b>Section No. :</b> LS 7-7.4
	<b>Effective :</b> September 21, 2009
<b>SECTION :</b> Library Services - Other	<b>Revised :</b> April 28, 2014, September 27, 2021
<b>SUBJECT :</b> Accessibility	<b>Page 1 of 6</b>

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Welland Public Library is committed to ensuring that all Library services, resources, and facilities are provided in a manner that prioritizes equal access and integration for all individuals, including those living with a disability. We are committed to removing barriers to accessibility and treating people with disabilities in a manner that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

Furthermore, the Welland Public Library remains committed to the following principles:

- Continuing to meet its current and ongoing accessibility obligations under all applicable legislation (including but not limited to): The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), the Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA), the City of Welland's Accessibility Policy (SER-015-0009), and any requirements instituted by our facilities partners.
- Providing customer service excellent in serving and providing goods, services, and facilities to all customers, including people living with disabilities.
- Instituting and following accessible customer service procedures that are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people living with disabilities.

This policy applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, visitors, and contractors.

## **TRAINING**

The Welland Public Library is committed to providing all staff and volunteers with accessible customer service training, with reference to all applicable legislation as outlined above. Accessibility training for staff and volunteers relates to their specific roles within the organization. Training includes:

- Purpose of the AODA and the requirements for customer service standards
- A review of our Accessibility Policy
- How to interact and communicate with people living with various types of disabilities
- How to interact and communicate with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal and/or support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site (or otherwise) that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the library's goods, services, or facilities.

Staff/volunteer training will occur as soon as is practicable after being hiring. Additional training will be provided if/when policy changes occur. Training records are maintained by the Human Resources Department (City of Welland) and include the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

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### **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

The Welland Public Library is committed to providing relevant, inclusive, and responsive services for all customers, including those living with visible or non-visible disabilities. We believe in integration and strive to provide library services for all users, which may include adaptation/specialized design. The Library will offer alternative measures, including trained staff support, where necessary, so that persons with disabilities may obtain and use library services to the fullest extent possible

### **COMMUNICATIONS WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

When communicating with a person with a disability, library staff will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

The Chief Executive Officer or designate will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the Chief Executive Officer determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information/communications are unconvertible
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information/communications

### **WEB CONTENT**

The Welland Public Library is committed to meeting the internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements. We recognize the importance of providing accessible website content for our online users and strive to meet these standards whenever possible.

### **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 anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services available. In the case of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice may not be possible.

Notices will be made available in the following ways:

- 1) Welland Public Library Website ([www.wellandlibrary.ca](http://www.wellandlibrary.ca))
- 2) Welland Public Library Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Twitter)
- 3) Facilities closure notices posted at the applicable Branch

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### **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using library services. Some 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 at the library. In such circumstances, the library may offer a person with a disability another reasonable, alternative measure to assist them in obtaining/using library services.

We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices, including those available for on-site use.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

People with disabilities and their service animals are welcome at the library. Service animals are permitted on the parts of our properties that are open to the public, as well as third parties.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators (such as when it wears a harness or vest), or when it helps the person to perform certain tasks. When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (e.g.: letter or form) from a regulated health care professional that confirms the person requires the assistance of a service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

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 explain why the animal is excluded and ensure an alternate means is available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from library services. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is appropriately controlled at all times.

### **SUPPORT PERSONS**

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

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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 at the library. Prior to making a decision, the Welland Public Library will

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health and safety of the person or others on the 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.

### **INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS**

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the Welland Public Library shall consult with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communications 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
- g) publications

The library purchases accessible materials in a variety of formats for the use of all patrons in accordance with our Collection Development Policy (LS 2-2.1).

### **FEEDBACK ON SERVICES**

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods/services is encouraged.

Feedback may be provided in the following ways:

- 1) Via email to [administration@wellandlibrary.ca](mailto:administration@wellandlibrary.ca)
- 2) By phone: 905-734-6210, ext. 2500
- 3) In person: 50 the Boardwalk, Welland ON, L3B 6J1

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner

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- 1) A notification of the complaint will be shared with the Chief Executive Officer
- 2) The Chief Executive Officer will make the relevant staff/contractors aware of the complaint and will seek comment to explain the matter, or as required, will seek feedback on how to rectify the matter in the most efficient manner.
- 3) The Chief Executive Officer will reply to the individual who has shared the complaint within 5 business days, providing an explanation and summary of next steps, or to request additional time to address the nature of the complaint.

### **INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY REGULATION, 191/11**

The Welland Public Library is committed to ensuring that compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulation is achieved.

#### **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.

### **PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES, & 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.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Recruitment is handled by Human Resources Department (City of Welland).

The City of Welland notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. Job applicants are notified that when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. Human Resources staff consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation. Further:

- Successful applicants are notified of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.
- Staff are notified that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as is practicable after they begin their employment.
- Employees are provided with updated information whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Human Resources staff consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account accessibility needs that arise

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from a disability. HR staff will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, the Chief Executive Officer will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, the Chief Executive Officer will provide workplace emergency information to a designated support person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when an employee moves to a different location within the organization
- b) when the employee's overall accommodation needs/plans are reviewed
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

There is a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

There is also a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development, and redeployment processes consider the accessibility needs of all employees.

### **DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES**

The Welland Public Library is committed to meeting accessibility laws and standards when building or when making changing to public spaces.

Our public spaces include:

- Service related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas
- Indoor lounge areas
- Computer stations

*This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.*