



POLICY: Accessibility in the Library		POLICY NO: OP 09
POLICY LEVEL: Operational	LAST REVIEW / REVISION DATE: September 10, 2024	SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE: September 2027

Accessibility in the Library

The Stratford Public Library is committed to ensuring its programs and services are accessible to all persons who live, learn, work, plan, and invest in our community. The intent of this policy is to ensure that the Stratford Public Library meets the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and all related standards and regulations introduced under this legislation, ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities to:

- Obtain information about and communicate with the Stratford Public Library;
- Obtain, use and benefit from the Library’s resources, services and spaces; and
- Be employed by the Stratford Public Library.

1. Guidelines

The Library will ensure that each employee, volunteer and patron receives equitable and discrimination-free treatment with respect to employment and services, and receives accommodation, where required, in a timely manner, and in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA and its regulations.

2. Responsibilities

For the purposes of the AODA, the Library provides services on behalf of the municipality, and is therefore considered, along with the municipality, to be a public sector organization. The Library complies with the obligations for this sector as set out in the AODA regulations.

The Board ensures that the Library complies with the spirit, principles and intent of the AODA and designates the CEO as the individual accountable for the organization’s compliance with legislation. The CEO will ensure that all policies and procedures comply with the AODA and any regulations made pursuant to the AODA.

The Library is included within regular Accessibility Compliance Reports filed by the City of Stratford.

3. Accessibility Plan

As per the AODA and its related regulations, the City of Stratford is required to develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and to review it at least once every five years. The Library will continue to work with the City and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to establish, implement, maintain and document this plan and will outline the Library’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers.

This plan is available on the City’s website and is provided in accessible formats upon request.

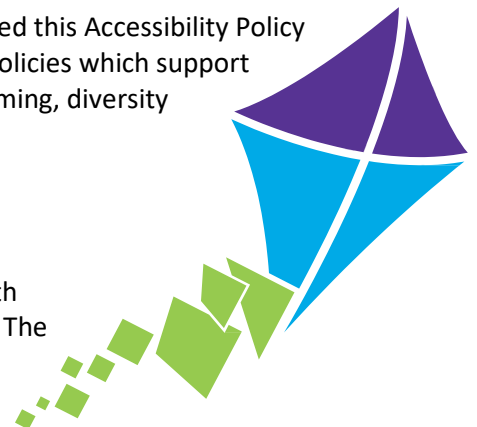
4. Policies and Procedures

In accordance with the AODA and related regulations, the Library has developed this Accessibility Policy which includes the required customer service elements as well as additional policies which support accessibility as related to human resources, collection development, programming, diversity and inclusion.

5. Customer Service

Assistive Devices

The Library will encourage the use of personal assistive devices by persons with disabilities to access the library’s collections, resources, facilities and services. The



Library will provide at least one computer workstation which is equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features. Library staff will be trained in their use and will support their use by others. Additional assistive technologies may also be made available for loan or for in-library use.

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 in obtaining and using Library services, where the Library has other such measures available.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a safe manner at all times.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals and keep those animals with them in areas that are open to the public when accessing library resources, services and facilities, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

In the event that a service animal is prohibited from the premises, the Library will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Library's resources, services or facilities.

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, as outlined by the definition of a service animal.

Service animals must be supervised by their owners and kept in control when used to access the Library's resources, services and facilities.

Support Persons

The Library will encourage the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying persons with disabilities, when accessing Library resources, services and facilities.

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 required.

The Library may request the assistance of a support person for a person with a disability in order to ensure the health and safety of that person or of others on the premises. This will occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access the Library's resources, services or facilities.

Training

The Library will provide training on AODA legislation and all mandatory, province-wide standards, and best practices. The Library will also support the keeping of records related to the completed training.

The following individuals will receive training on the topics outlined in the regulation:

- Staff, volunteers, Board members, agents/contractors and any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Library; and
- Staff, volunteers, Board members, agents/contractors and any other individuals who participate in the development of Library policy, practices and procedures governing the provision of resources and services to members of the public.

Communications

The Library will 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 regard, types of communications include:

- Policies
- Accessibility plans
- Public safety information prepared for the public
- Forms, surveys, tools used to gather feedback
- Information on collections and materials in accessible format

The Library will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests for documents in alternate and accessible formats in a timely manner, at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others, and in consultation with the person making the request.

The Library provides a website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) most recently adopted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as mandated within the legislation and/or related regulations.

Service Disruptions

The Library will provide reasonable notification of all service interruptions to facilities, services or systems that may affect people with disabilities in accessing the Library's resources, services, or facilities.

Notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities, services or systems that may be available.

Notice of a planned disruption will be provided in advance whenever possible. In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided in as timely a manner as possible.

Procurement

The Library will make every effort to incorporate accessible criteria and accessibility features when procuring goods, services and facilities. The Library will consult with individuals and organizations representing people with disabilities when designing library spaces.

Employment

During the recruitment process, employees and the public will be notified about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities during the assessment or selection process.

Successful applicants will be notified of Library policies and any other additional supports for the accommodation of employees with disabilities.

The Library will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication job supports upon request.

The Library will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability.

The Library will document individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities according to Library procedures.

The Library will develop and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations to return to work.

During performance management, career development/advancement and redeployment, managers and supervisors will consider the accessibility needs of their employees with disabilities and as well as individual accommodation plans.

Related Documents

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), R.S.O. 2005
- [Integrated Accessibility Standards](#), O. Reg 191/11
- [The Ontario Human Rights Code](#), R.S.O. 1990
- [LB 05 Delegation of Authority](#)
- [OP 08 Collection Development Policy](#)
- [HR 01 Hiring and Management of Employees](#)
- HR 03 Stratford Public Library Staff Manual
- [City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)

ORIGINAL DATE ADOPTED	November 17, 2009	Review Cycle	3 Years
REVIEW/APPROVAL HISTORY	September 10, 2024		