

Ajax Public Library

Accessible Customer Service Policy



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1. Purpose

Ajax Public Library strives to be a welcoming and exceptional Library empowering success within our diverse community by designing experiences and connections where community, discovery, and innovation intersect. The Library is committed to using its services to provide all individuals, including those with disabilities, an equal opportunity to effectively use the Library in an independent, dignified manner. The following policy details the Library's Accessible Customer Service standards for community members with disabilities. This policy will be made available, upon request, to any member of the public, in a format suitable to the requestor.

2. Definitions

- **Accessible:** When a program, activity, meeting, or any other event is readily available to an individual, regardless of their abilities. When used in reference to a facility, it means that a facility can be approached, entered, and used by any individual, regardless of their abilities.
- **Assistive Devices:** Products, equipment, or technological aids used by people with disabilities to help prevent, compensate, relieve, or neutralize a disability.
- **Disability:** as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11 (AODA) sec. 2, "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, 1997.
 - The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as invisible disabilities, and disabilities for which the effects may come and go.
- **Multiple Formats:** Form of communicating information that may be oral, written, in sign language, recorded, through computer technology, or, other means that are readily understandable to, and usable by a person, regardless of their disability.
- **Personal Assistive Devices:** Products, equipment, or technological aids used by people with disabilities that help prevent, relieve, or neutralize a disability. Such devices include, but are not limited to: walkers, magnification devices, or personal oxygen tanks.
- **Service Animal:** An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if: it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability; or, if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. Regulated health professionals include:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.
- **Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, a support person is someone who accompanies them in order to assist with communication, mobility, accessibility, daily living needs, or medical needs. A support person can be a paid personal support worker (PSW), a volunteer, a family member, or a friend.
- **Third Party:** An individual or group who is not a member of the public or service user. A third party may be a volunteer or agent of the municipality, temporary support staff, a technician, a business associate and/or any other stakeholder who is not an employee or service user.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of the Library's operations, including its services and facilities, information and communications, technology, and employment opportunities. It further applies to staff, volunteers, and any third parties providing goods, services, products, or facilities on the Library's behalf to the public.

4. Procedures

4.1. Accessibility to Library Services and Facilities

- 4.1.1. The Library permits people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a service animal except where excluded by applicable law (for example, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990, or, the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001). Where a service animal is excluded by law, the Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure access to Library goods and services are provided by alternative means. A customer who is accompanied by a service animal shall be considerate of the health and safety of themselves and others.
- 4.1.2. The Library will permit people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a support person. The Library will not prevent any person with a disability from having full access to their support person while they are in any branch of the Library.
- 4.1.3. The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of other persons in the Library. The Library will not make such a requirement without consulting the person with the disability and only after considering the following situations:
 - i. When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or other persons in the Library;
 - ii. That risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
 - iii. That any potential risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
 - iv. The assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and,
 - v. The assessment of the risk is based upon the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance, or fears about a disability.
- 4.1.4. The Library will provide advance notice of fees payable for a Library service. The Library will waive program fees, when practicable, for support persons assisting clients.

- 4.1.5. The Library will provide public notice of all temporary interruptions to the availability of Library services or facilities.
- 4.1.6. The Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure that people with disabilities are able to use their personal assistive devices in Library facilities unless otherwise prohibited by law.
- 4.1.7. The Library will ensure that Library staff have the proper training in order to effectively illustrate the use of the assistive equipment that the Library has available to assist people with disabilities.

4.2. Accessible Library Services

4.2.1. Facility

Library facilities are accessible to people using wheelchairs, scooters, or walkers as follows:

- Accessible parking spots close to entrances.
- Main entrances are at street level.
- Automatic doors at all entrances.
- Aisles within facilities are large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters.
- An elevator is available in the two storied Main Branch.
- Accessible washrooms at all sites with washroom fittings are at appropriate heights for customers using a wheelchair and sinks are equipped with hands free technology to facilitate ease of use.
- Service desks offer an accessible service point where they are at a height which permits wheelchair/scooter approach.

4.2.2. Emergency Procedures, Plans, and Safety Information

The Library will provide its emergency procedures, plans, and health and safety information, that it makes available to the public, to persons with disabilities in an accessible format or with an appropriate communication support upon request.

4.2.3. Collections

The Library's collections include a variety of formats to support accessible requests including:

- Large print copies where available
- Audiobooks
- Decodable books
- Online accessible content, such as electronic databases, music, ebooks, e-audiobooks, and movies
- Some films include closed captioning and/or have described video

- In partnership with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), the Library offers audiobooks that can be played on a Daisy Reader and loans Daisy Readers as well
- Sensory kits and inclusive toy collection to encourage learning through play
- C-Pens Readers to read printed text aloud

4.2.4. Accessible Formats and Communication

The Library strives to produce accessible documents. The Library will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities:

- upon request in a timely manner that takes into account the persons' accessibility needs due to a disability, and
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

The Library will consult with the person making the request and determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support and notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

4.2.5. Website Accessibility

The Library shall ensure that its internet website(s) and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in Sec. 14 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Alternate text will be provided for all photos and images to be used by screen readers, search engines, or when the image cannot be loaded.

Web content will be provided in alternate formats if required. Customers can contact the Coordinator of Marketing and Communications. This will be indicated on the Accessibility page.

4.2.6. Services

The Main Branch of the Library has a walker available for the use of customers.

For customers with low or no vision, the Main Branch of the Library offers a computer workstation with assistive software and hardware.

For customers with hearing and/or speech disabilities, the Main Branch of the Library offers the use of an UbiDuo face-to-face communication device and assistive listening devices in the Rotary Room and Multi-Purpose Room at the Audley branch.

The Library delivers materials to customers who are temporarily, or permanently, homebound as part of the Visiting Library Service.

For customers with limited mobility, the Library provides curbside services for individuals to pick up their hold materials.

In the event of a disruption to Library services that negatively impacts the ability of persons with disabilities to use or benefit from the Library's services, the Library will provide notice of the disruption to the public. Planned disruptions will be advertised with reasonable advanced notice.

4.2.7. Third-Party Vendors

The Library strives to subscribe, purchase, or make publicly available products from third-party vendors that adhere to AODA standards. The Library cannot guarantee all products meet AODA standards. The Library will communicate requests to vendors as situations arise.

4.3. Training

4.3.1. All members of staff, all volunteers, and all third parties, who deal with members of the public on behalf of the Library, will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities.

4.3.2. All persons who participate in developing the Library's policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to members of the public or other third parties will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities.

4.3.3. The training will include:

- a) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- b) Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- c) Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- d) Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at the Library that may help people with disabilities access the Library's services; and,
- e) Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Library's services.

4.3.4. Training will be provided to all new employees and volunteers as part of the orientation process. All existing employees will receive the appropriate

training on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

- 4.3.5. A record of training provided to Library staff and volunteers, including the dates on which the training is provided, and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be maintained.
- 4.3.6. It will be the responsibility of the Chief Librarian and Executive Officer (CLEO) or their designate to ensure that Library staff and volunteers receive the necessary training regarding the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 4.3.7. The CLEO or their designate will ensure that permanent records of the training are maintained for members of the Library's staff and volunteers. The records will include the name, date, and training format. This record will be updated by the CLEO or their designate, each time an employee receives additional training.
- 4.3.8. Corporate Services staff will be responsible to maintain permanent records of the training provided for Library volunteers.
- 4.3.9. All new staff members will undergo training as part of the orientation process.
- 4.3.10. Existing staff members will receive ongoing training.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Chief Librarian and Executive Officer (CLEO) is responsible for implementation of this policy.
- 5.2. Management and supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff have received training and are applying the policy equitably.
- 5.3. Employees are responsible for applying the policy.

6. Privacy and Confidentiality

The Library protects the privacy and confidentiality of all customers' personal information in keeping with the access to information and privacy provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 (MFIPPA) and other applicable legislation.

The Library collects personal information of customers under the authority of section 23(4) of the Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.44, and personal information will only be used to administer services and programs at the Library.

Access to personal information is limited to only those employees who need access in order to perform their assigned duties. The Library also maintains security standards and procedures regarding unauthorized access to personal information to prevent unauthorized removal or alteration of data.

The Library will not disclose personal information to any third parties without having obtained prior consent of the person to whom the information pertains, except when MFIPPA permits disclosure or other applicable law requires that the Library disclose the personal information.

7. Communications

The Library will make every effort to make its communications accessible by:

- i. Making original communications more accessible through plain language;
- ii. Changing the usual method of communication to meet an individual's need;
- iii. Using assistive devices or services where available.

The Library will provide the Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy in alternate formats upon request. Additionally, staff will print copies of the Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy, free of charge, when requested.

The Library follows a process for receiving and responding to feedback in a timely manner about how it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities. Customers are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the Library's provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

- Feedback can be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by email.
- All feedback received will be directed to the Chief Librarian and Executive Officer (CLEO) or designate for review.
- Upon review, the CLEO or designate will determine if any further action is required. Further actions could include, but are not limited to, the purchase of assistive equipment, a change in the Library's policies, procedures, or practices, or additional staff training.

The CLEO or designate will respond to customer feedback, providing the customer has left their name and contact information, informing the customer of the action(s) taken. The response will be delivered using the communication method desired by the customer.

8. Inquiries

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the Manager of Public Service.

9. Related Documents

9.1. LIB-AP-076 Visiting Library Service

10. Distribution

This policy should be posted on the website and shared with all staff.