2016-2020 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In Accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

January 2016

Alternative formats available upon request.

Clarington Public Library Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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Statement of Commitment

Clarington Public Library is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or the AODA.

Introduction

In 2005, the Ontario government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or the AODA. The goal of the AODA is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. To achieve this goal, the Government of Ontario created standards in five key areas of life: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces. The standards support the principles of the AODA to ensure dignity, integration, independence and equal opportunity. Compliance with the AODA and its Standards is a mandatory requirement for both private and public sector organizations.

The AODA recognizes that people with disabilities are vibrant, important, and a growing part of the Ontario population. By removing barriers to participation that exist in Ontario, the AODA seeks to maximize both the inclusivity of our society and the value that people with disabilities contribute to our economy.

This accessibility plan outlines the steps Clarington Public Library is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Our plan shows how Clarington Public Library will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

Outlines how Clarington Public Library will provide equal opportunity for people with disabilities to obtain, use and benefit from Library services and programs.

- Created and implemented Accessible Customer Service Standard policy
- Training on the customer service standards completed for all existing staff and is included in the orientation for new staff
- Training on the integrated standards and Human Rights Code rolled out to existing staff is included in the orientation for new staff
- Clarington Public Library provides access to material in a variety of formats which are suited to accommodate those who may have a perceptual disability. These include books on CD, audio books, e-books (settings can be adjusted with the majority of our downloadable e-books to suit personal preferences for text size and typeface) through OverDrive, large print books
- Many of our databases offer text to speech capability, which includes Gale, Infotrac, PebbleGo, Early World of Learning, Tumblebooks, and TumbleReaders
- The Library purchased iPads in 2013 that include a google translate app installed to assist people who are non-verbal or speak different languages
- The Bowmanville branch has a walker that is available for use to members of the public who experience mobility limitations
- Established a process for posting service disruptions for the public to the Library's website and social media sites
- Established a feedback process that includes to enable members of the public to comment on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.
  - Feedback can be provided through our website, printed member feedback forms, in-person, by email, mail, telephone, fax
- Provide documents in alternative formats upon request for a person with a disability

Information and Communication

Outlines how Clarington Public Library will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

- Created Accessible Information and Communications policy to incorporate all requirements of the Information and Communications Standard
- Statement about availability of accessible formats and communication supports posted on our website

- Key documents posted on website in accessible format including Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Accessible Policies
- Clarington Public Library uses the BrowseAloud screen-reading software on its website. BrowseAloud is accessed through the "Make this Website Talk" link, accessible on every page of the Library's website through the footer menu. The toolbar automatically "follows" the user as they navigate the Library's website until the user disables it. BrowseAloud is offered through a web-based toolbar with no software required or expense on behalf of the user. The software was updated in September 2015, providing improved website integration options, a mobile-friendly launch pad, improved help options, and a variety of WCAG (Web-content Accessibility Guidelines)-compliant colours
- Clarington Public Library's online quarterly program guide is now a fully accessible PDF. The PDF file is created using tags and embedded elements such as links and image descriptors which may be read by screen reading software, improving ease of access and navigation within the document
- Launched Library mobile app in April 16, 2014 which makes key information and services already online available anywhere, anytime on Android and Apple devices. Accessibility settings on mobile devices allow for customization to meet user preferences
- Library launched new website that meets WCAG 2.0 Level AAA compliance October 24, 2013
- The Library regularly evaluates compliance of website accessibility
- Senior Library staff received training on creating accessible documents
- The Library will provide emergency information in an alternative format or with communication supports, upon request

Employment

Outlines how the Clarington Public Library will make employment practices and its workplace more accessible to potential and existing employees with disabilities.

- Created Accessible Employment policy to incorporate all requirements of the Employment Standard
- Employment opportunities web page updated to include statement of availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
- All job postings include statement on the availability of accessibility accommodations in recruitment process
- Updated our recruitment process to ensure candidates are notified of the availability of accessibility accommodations when contacted for an interview
- New employees are notified on the availability of accommodations during their offer of employment
- Notified existing staff of the availability of accessibility accommodations
- Statement of availability of accessibility accommodations included in performance evaluation forms for all staff

- Communicated to all staff that an individualized workplace emergency plan can be developed if requested
- Established a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability, including accommodations necessary for their return to work

Procurement

Outlines how the Clarington Public Library will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not possible to do so.

- Adopted a purchasing policy in 2014, based on the Municipality of Clarington's purchasing by-law, to ensure staff and vendors comply with AODA requirements
- A number of accessibility designs were incorporated into the recent Courtice branch expansion/renovation such as:
    - an accessible family washroom,
    - installation of automatic door openers,
    - adult size change table in accessible family washroom,
    - assistance button in accessible family washroom,
    - signage enhancements,
    - variety of sizes and styles of chairs available in the branch,
    - accessible service counter,
    - the facility is wheelchair accessible and was designed to be open and easy to navigate through

Self-Service Kiosks

- We purchased and installed self-service kiosks in our Bowmanville, Courtice and Newcastle branches in September 2013. The Self Service Kiosks have a 'High Visibility' option that allows library members to check out items, return items, and check their account with a higher contrast background for those with visual disabilities. The Self Service Kiosks also have a font enlarger for library members to view the text on the screen in a larger size as well as multiple languages including but not limited to Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Other

- Consultation with the Municipality of Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee with respect to the renovations of our Courtice branch from 6,000 sq. ft. to 12,000 sq. ft. in 2015
- Consulted with the Municipality of Clarington's Accessibility Coordinator on matters relating to the AODA, accessible documents and accommodations.

Section Two: Strategies and Actions Planned for 2016-2020

Customer Service

- Continue to consider accessibility needs when acquiring new collection materials and databases
- Continue on-going compliance with existing obligations
- Continue to receive feedback on the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities and take the appropriate action as required
- Explore industry best practices on providing accessible customer service

Information and Communication

- Ensure all public service documents are accessible
- Post a statement about availability of accessible formats and communication supports at all service counters
- Review feedback processes and update, as required
- Train all staff on creating accessible documents, as required
- Post annual Library emergency plan to website as an accessible PDF
- Ensure ongoing website compliance
- Provide information in an alternative format or with communication supports, when requested

Employment

- Review and update existing procedure to support employees who need temporary or permanent work accommodation as part of the Library's early and safe return to work policy
- Review and update individual accommodation plans annually
- Continue to take accessibility needs into account through the performance management process, career development/advancement process
- Continue to notify candidates on the availability of accommodations during the recruitment process
- Ensure employees know that disability-related accommodations and emergency plans are available

Procurement

- Continue to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, where possible

Self-Service Kiosks

- Ensure on-going compliance by carefully reviewing all purchases and incorporating accessible features as much as possible

Training

- Continue to train new staff through onboarding and orientation, and existing staff on an ongoing basis, as required
- Provide current staff and volunteers with updated information on changes to our accessibility policies and continue providing accessibility training to all new staff and volunteers.
- Continue to ensure that all new contractors are trained
- Review and update existing accessibility training for board members

Design of Public Spaces

- Accessible automated power door operators will be installed on the family washroom door in our Bowmanville branch in late 2016
- Incorporate accessibility features when redesigning our service counters
- Ensure we provide accessible seating and mobility aid space in our waiting areas

For more information

For more information on this accessibility plan or to request free accessible formats of this document, please contact Linda Kent, Library Director of Clarington Public Library at: lkent@clarington-library.on.ca or 905-623-7322 ext. 2702.