



Accessibility

Operational

Purpose

The Brantford 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 Brantford 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), and the City of Brantford's *Facility Accessibility Design Standards* (FADS).
- Providing excellent service 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.

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

Policy

Training

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

- The purpose for AODA and the requirements for customer service standards
- The Human Rights Code
- 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 practicable after being hired. Additional training will be provided if/when policy changes occur. Training records are maintained by Administration and include the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Customer Service Standards

The Brantford Public Library is committed to providing relevant, inclusive, and responsive services for all customers, including those living with visible or non-visible disabilities. The Library believes in integration and strives to provide library services for all visitors, which may include adaptations/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, library staff will provide information about the organization and its services in accessible formats or with communication supports:

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

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

- An explanation as to why the information/communications are unconvertible
- A summary of the unconvertible information/communications.

Web Content

The Brantford 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 these standards whenever possible.

Temporary Service Disruptions

The Library will make reasonable efforts 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:

- Brantford Public Library Website (www.brantfordlibrary.ca)
- Brantford Public Library Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Twitter)
- Facilities closure notices posted at the applicable location.

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

The Library welcomes and provides equitable access for persons with disabilities accompanied by a service animal to all facilities. Individuals will be permitted to enter the facility with a service animal and will be permitted to keep the animal with them unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their 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. 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 Brantford 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 and Communications

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the Brantford Public Library shall 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, include consultation with individuals making requests, and take into account the person's accessibility needs. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be available at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. In this context, types of communications include:

- policies
- accessibility plans
- emergency procedures, plan, and public safety information prepared for the public
- forms, surveys and other tools used to gather feedback
- information on collections/materials in accessible format
- employment standards
- publications.

Accessible Library Collections

The Brantford Public Library is committed to providing accessible formats of existing library materials such as large print, audio or electronic versions, upon request. When buying new library materials, we consider the accessibility needs of customers and build collections that are accessible to the widest range of people. Notice of the availability of accessible formats is communicated on the Library's website. Accessible formats include:

- Large Print
- Ebooks
- Audiobooks
- Decodable books
- Playaway audible readers
- Books on CD
- Vox books (Books with built in speakers)

Transportation

The Brantford Public Library does not provide transportation services.

Accessibility Compliance Reports

Accessibility Compliance reports are available to the public on the Library website.

Feedback on Services

All feedback regarding accessibility shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Librarian or designate for review and action. Feedback may be received in the following ways:

- In person to the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Librarian or designate, during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
- By telephone to the Chief Executive Officer or designate
- In writing to the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Librarian or designate at the Library's mailing address

- Through feedback forms available at all Library facilities and through the Library's website.
- By electronic mail to info@brantford.library.on.ca
- By any other means of communication to the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Librarian or designate.

The ability to submit feedback is promoted on the Library website and in all Library facilities.

Integrated Accessibility Regulation, 191/11

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

The Accessibility Plan

The Library will 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 include 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

The Brantford public Library 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 accommodations in a manner that takes into account accessibility needs that arise 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:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and

- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

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

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed:

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

The Library will establish a process for the development of documented individualized accommodation plans for its employees with disabilities. In consultation with the employee, their manager, and union representative, if applicable, the Plan will document the workplace accommodations that will be required by the employee to perform the duties of their role at the Library.

When absent from work due to a disability, the Library will adhere to its return to work process, including the provision of accessibility accommodations if required.

The Library's performance management, career development, and redeployment processes consider the individual accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities and their documented accommodation plan, if one has been established.

Design of Public Spaces

The Brantford Public Library is committed to meeting accessibility laws and standards when building or when making changes to public spaces; this includes the requirements established under the City of Brantford's *Facility Accessibility Design Standards*. The Library's 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.

History

Supersedes: Accessible Customer Service Standard (October 2009, November 2015, December 2019)

Background documents, related policies: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Regulations 429/07*; *The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*, the *Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA)*; *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*; City of Brantford's *Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)*.

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