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The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Deep River Public Library provides library services that are accessible to all community members, and that we meet the standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Deep River Public Library is committed to providing equitable access to library service. The Library will ensure that each employee, volunteer and patron receives equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required in a timely manner.

The Deep River Public Library operates in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and its regulations. The Library meets these obligations in partnership with the Town of Deep River.

Section 2: Definitions

“Accessibility” means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

“Accessible formats” may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“Accommodation” means the special arrangements made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experience available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person’s unique needs.

“AODA” means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

“Assistive devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks.

A “**barrier**” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“**Communication supports**” are tools or devices that facilitate communications for a person with a disability may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“**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 coordination, 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*,

“**Library service**” means what the library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of core values and/or community needs.

“**Service animals and emotional support animals**” refers to animals used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability.

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability; or
- the person provides documentation from one of designated, regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability: (O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

An animal is an emotional support animal (ESA) if its use is supported by a qualified physician, psychiatrist or other mental health professional based upon a disability-related need. ESAs do not have training for specific tasks, and service providers are not required to allow ESAs on their premises under the AODA. The Library may allow ESAs. They may, however, ask for proof that a customer’s animal is a support animal if not visibly obvious.

“**Support person**” means, in relation to a person with a disability, is another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Section 3: Responsibilities

1. For the purposes of AODA, the library provides services on behalf of the municipality, and therefore is considered, along with the municipality, to be a “small designated public sector organization with at least one but fewer than 50 employees” as defined within the *O. Reg. 165/16*. The library complies with the obligations for this sector as set out in the

AODA regulations. As the library provides services on behalf of the municipality, we do not need to submit accessibility reports independent of the Town.

2. The Deep River Public Library Board ensures that the library complies with the spirit, principles and intent of AODA and designates the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as the individual accountable for the organization's compliance with legislation.
3. The CEO will ensure that policies and procedures comply with the AODA and any regulations made under the AODA.

Section 4: The Accessibility Plan

1. The library will work with the Town of Deep River to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the library's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. The Library's plan will complement the Town's Accessibility Plan for its facilities and public spaces.
2. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
3. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
4. The plan will be posted on the library's website and be provided in accessible formats upon request.

Section 5: Policies and Procedures

The Deep River Public Library has developed this Accessibility in the Library policy to include Customer Service elements in accordance with the AODA and Ontario Regulation 165/16.

Other library policies will also support accessibility, including:

1. Our collection development policy will address the availability of materials in a variety of accessible formats;
2. Our human resource policies will address training on AODA regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;
3. Our purchasing policy will include accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities; and
4. Our Internet services policies will include accessibility provisions with respect to technology and the library's website.

Section 6: Customer Service

The Deep River Public Library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community. In the context of customer service the Library will commit to the following.

1. The library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
 - a. encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our services and programs;

- b. providing at least one computer workstation which is equipped with assistive technology and a range of accessibility features;
 - c. arranging for access to materials in an accessible format where they exist which may include archival material and special collections;
 - d. providing a library website with content that will meet or exceed the required standards for accessibility;
 - e. encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
 - f. waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification;
 - g. permitting service animals and emotional support animals to assist users and provide alternative accommodation in situations where an animal is disallowed under the law.
2. The library will make every effort to communicate with users in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by providing:
 - a. this “Accessibility in the Library” policy in alternative formats upon request;
 - b. information on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and accessible services and programs;
 - c. reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and program for people with disabilities such as the library’s elevator;
 - d. a process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the library provides services to persons with disabilities.
3. The library will provide training to its board members, staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Section 7: Communication

1. 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 context, the types of communications include:
 - a. policies,
 - b. accessibility plans,
 - c. emergency procedures 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, and
 - f. employment standards.
2. Accessible formats of the library’s communications shall be made available:
 - a. in a timely manner,
 - b. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communications, and
 - c. in consultation with the person making the request.

Related Documents:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11

Ontario Regulation 165/16 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11* and amending O Reg. 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)