

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Newmarket Public Library:

- Provides all library resources, services, and facilities in ways that are equally accessible to all members of the community
- Is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

SCOPE:

This policy specifically addresses accessibility policies and standards specific to external customer service. It does not apply to services provided internally to employees of the Newmarket Public Library.

This policy applies to all persons who deal with customers, or to other third parties who deal with customers on the Library's behalf such as those providing program services. A person or third party can be an employee, volunteer, Board member, student on placement or otherwise engaged in the provision of library services to library users.

The AODA and the Customer Service Standard do not replace or change the requirements of existing federal and provincial laws.

DEFINITIONS:

- a) **AODA** means the Accessibility for Ontarians for Disabilities Act, 2005.
- b) **Assistive Device** means a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing library services.
- c) **Disability or Disabilities** 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, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, 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 or service dog or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
 - § An intellectual and/or 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.

- d) **Guide Dog** means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act: a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.
- e) **Library Premises** means premises operated by the Newmarket Public Library.
- f) **Library Services** means what the Library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of core values and delivery promises including meeting community needs.
- g) **Persons who Provide Library Services** means all persons who deal with customers, or other third parties who deal with customers on the Library's behalf such as those providing program services or renting Library premises for performances and events open to the public. A person or third party can be an employee, volunteer, Board member, student on placement or otherwise engaged in the provision of library services to customers.
- h) **Principle of Dignity** means the treatment of a person with a disability as a customer who is as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer. Treatment is not an afterthought or forcing acceptance of lesser service, quality or convenience.
- i) **Principle of Equal Opportunity** means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way services are provided. People with disabilities should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service and should not have to accept lesser quality and more inconvenience.
- j) **Principle of Independence** means freedom from control or influence of others or freedom to make one's own choices. It can also mean the freedom to do things in one's own way.
- k) **Principle of Integration** means allowing people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.
- l) **Service Animal** means any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons related to the disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.
- m) **Support Person** means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to Library services.
- n) **Universal Access** means to provide access to services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

1. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD STATEMENT

The Library is committed to providing quality services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use these services.

Guiding Principles

- Library service is relevant, inclusive and responsive for all, including persons with disabilities. Each member of the community has an equal opportunity to access public library services.
- Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The Library strives to provide “universal access” to library services for all people through integration unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from library services.
- The Library strives to provide library services in a way that meets the specific needs of the person with disabilities and is convenient and accessible to the person with disabilities.

2. COMMUNICATION WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Newmarket Public Library will communicate with people with a disability in ways that take into account their disability.

3. NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

The Newmarket Public Library will post a notice in the event of a temporary service disruption that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to the Library. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, its duration and an alternative service if available. The Library will make the disruption known to customers through signage and by such other methods as is reasonable in the circumstances.

4. SERVICE ANIMALS AND GUIDE DOGS

Guide dogs or other service animals are permitted in the library. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person’s disability, the person with a disability may be asked to show a letter from a medical professional confirming that the service animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability. It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure that the guide dog or service animal is kept in control.

5. SUPPORT PERSONS

A support person accompanying and assisting a person with a disability is welcome in the Library. When assisting a person with a disability to obtain or use Library services or to participate in a Library program, the support person will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

In situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of others, the Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person.

Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information discussed, the support person may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

6. ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND OTHER MEASURES THAT ASSIST WITH ACCESSIBILITY

A person with a disability may use their own assistive devices to access library service. It is the responsibility of the person using the assistive device to ensure that it is operated in a safe manner. Anyone with accessibility issues can seek assistance from Library staff.

7. ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

The Newmarket Public Library will ensure that all employees, volunteers, students on placement, third party contractors and persons who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures, receive training compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Training at the level appropriate of the interaction with the customer will be provided to all new persons whom this policy applies as practicable after an individual has been assigned duties.

Training will be on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of the delivery of library services and will cover the following:

- a) Review of the purposes of the AODA and 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 support person.
- d) Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at the Library that may help people with disabilities to access our services.
- e) Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing any Library services.

8. ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES FEEDBACK

Newmarket Public Library welcomes customer input and provides a feedback, review and response process. Feedback may be given in person, by telephone, in writing or in electronic format or through other methods.