

**Policy No.:** P13

**Policy Title:** Accessibility: Client Services Standards, Communication and Information Standards, Design of Public Spaces

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**Point of Contact:** Director, Engagement & Client Experience

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## POLICY STATEMENT

Pickering Public Library (the “Library”) is committed to accessibility for all clients by creating accessible facilities, events, and services, based on the principles of universal access; removing existing barriers for persons with disabilities; and providing information and staff training to create an environment of inclusion within the Library.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was enacted in 2005 to facilitate the development of specific standards with respect to improving accessibility across the province. Ontario’s first accessibility standard, the Customer Service Standard, came into effect on January 1, 2008.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) came into effect on July 1, 2011. These included the Information and Communications Standards.

The Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) is an amendment to the IAS and came into effect on January 1, 2013.

Pickering Public Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the core principles of the standards: dignity, independence, and integration except when alternate measures are necessary to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Dignity and independence: Interaction with all individuals will be in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. It includes

consideration for how any accommodation is provided and the individual's own participation in the process.

Integration: Achieving full participation for persons with disabilities requires barrier-free and inclusive design and removal of existing barriers, whether they are physical, sensory, developmental, or systemic. Preventing and removing barriers means that persons with disabilities will be able to access opportunities provided by the Library in all areas of service.

There are occasions when client service must be provided using alternate measures that are not integrated. Alternate measures will only be employed when they cannot be integrated and are the only means of providing client service to a person with a disability.

## DEFINITIONS

### **Assistive Device**

- Any device designed or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task or procedure. This may include but is not limited to crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, personal sound amplification devices, technological or computerized devices, etc.

### **Clients**

- Library clients can be visitors, Board members, volunteers, and community stakeholders.

### **Disability**

- A disability is any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, disability since birth, or illness, and without limiting the foregoing, includes diabetes, epilepsy, 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 service animal, wheelchair, or other remedial appliance or device.
- A disability might also be: a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability; a learning disability or 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*.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

### 1. Training

- Staff are trained on how to provide client service to people with disabilities in accordance with the core principles of the accessibility standards.
- Training will be delivered to any Board member, volunteer, or any other individual who might reasonably be expected to interact with the public on behalf of the Library or influence the development of policies, practices, and procedures. Training will be provided to individuals or groups as soon as practicable after that individual or group is assigned with their duties.
- Any substantive amendment to policy, practice, or procedures with respect to the provision of accessible client service may also necessitate further training.

### 2. Communication

- The Library recognizes that access to information and the ability to communicate clearly are essential in our society.
- The Library will create, provide, and receive information and communications in consultation with and in ways that are accessible for persons with disabilities. Such accommodations will be in accordance with the requirements of the Information and Communications section of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11.

### 3. Website

- The Library's website is accessible. It currently conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.
- The Library's website uses a pre-set font type and size for optimal layout, but the font can be adjusted by clients to meet their specific needs. Information is readily available in HTML format with Adobe PDF as the standard for documents, forms, and reports.
- The Library is committed to the use of World Wide Web Consortium (W3c.org) best practice technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and to using the latest versions when supported.

### 4. Print Material

- The Library uses Arial 12 point for its official documents, correspondence, reports, minutes, etc.

## 5. Alternate Formats for Printed Documents

- The Library will provide any document produced by the Library in an alternate format upon request, unless it is not technically feasible to do so, and subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*.
- Alternate formats can include, but are not limited to, web access, large print versions of the document, or a text-only electronic file that can be read by a computer or printed in Braille.
- Requests for information in alternate format will be sent to the Manager, Client Experience. Library staff will make every effort to provide the information in the preferred format as soon as possible.

## 6. Accessible Library Materials

- The Library will make library materials available in an accessible format for clients such as large print, audiobooks, and ebooks.
- The Library is a member of the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), a non-profit run by public libraries that leverages the existing collections of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). CELA has the largest collection of alternative format materials in Canada and provides clients with both digital and physical formats. Clients with print disabilities can register to access this collection and order materials for pick-up at any Pickering Public Library location.
- DAISY Readers and a rotating collection of DAISY Talking Books are also available at the Central Library. For more information, contact the Manager, Client Experience.

## 7. Client Service

- The Library shall develop and implement client service procedures which will reflect the principles of respect for the individual, independence, integration, and equal access for all; and in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

## 8. Events

- To request American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for Library events you wish to attend, please contact the Manager, Client Events to make arrangements. Due to the limited availability of trained ASL interpreters, a minimum three weeks' notice is required.

## 9. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- Public notices of service disruptions will be provided on the Library's website and also be displayed on the premises where the disruption is occurring. Such public notices will let clients know when facilities, amenities, or services are unavailable, the expected duration of this disruption, and alternate services provided (if any).

## 10. Service Animals

- Service animals are permitted in the Library. Clients requiring service animals may be asked to confirm status of a service animal if its purpose is not immediately evident.
- This requirement does not apply where an animal is excluded by law from being on the premises, or if the presence of the service animal adversely affects the health and safety of others. For example, regulations under the *Health and Protection and Promotion Act, 1990* and *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* prohibit animals from entering areas where food is prepared, stored, or sold.

## 11. Support Persons

- A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or to assist with accessing services. Clients with disabilities are welcome to be accompanied by a support person in any area open to the public or to use any Library service.
- Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that clients with disabilities are not prevented from having access to their support person while on the premises. In some cases, it may be necessary for the support person to provide consent to rules specific to the service provided, such as confidentiality.

## 12. Design of Public Space Standards

- The Library recognizes that the creation of an accessible environment is an essential component of full access and inclusion for persons with disabilities. The Library will endeavor to create safe and accessible facilities which provide equal access to events and services provided by the Library.
- The Library will use requirements of the Design of Public Spaces (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment Standards) and accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code as minimum standards and will seek to exceed these requirements, where reasonably possible, in order to create an accessible and inclusive community.

### 13. Feedback

- The Library is committed to using client feedback to enhance accessible service delivery. Comments can be submitted online at the [Assistive Services | Pickering Library webpage](#) or to the Manager, Client Experience.
- Individuals may also provide feedback in person to library staff or in writing using paper comment forms. All feedback is monitored, tracked, and responded to by Library leadership.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.  
Please speak to Library staff for assistance.