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The Cobourg Public Library provides open access to superior resources and quality customer service to promote and support personal and community growth for the residents of Cobourg and Hamilton Township. The Library is committed to using its services to provide all individuals, including those with disabilities, an equal opportunity to effectively use the Library in an independent, dignified manner. The following policy statements detail the Library’s Customer Service standards for community members with disabilities. This policy will be made available, upon request, to any member of the public, in a format suitable to the requestor.

Definitions

Accessible - means that a program, activity, meeting, or any other event is readily usable by an individual, regardless of his or her abilities. When used in reference to a facility, it means that a facility can be approached, entered and used by any individual, regardless of his or her abilities.

Assistive Devices - are products, equipment or technological aids used by people with disabilities that help prevent, relieve or neutralize a disability.

Disability – as per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) sec. 2, “disability” means, (a) 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 co-ordination, 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; (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability; (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language; (d) a mental disorder; or, (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Multiple Format - means a form of communicating information that may be: oral; written; in sign language; recorded; through computer technology; or, other means that are readily understandable to, and usable by a person, regardless of his or her disability.

Personal Assistive Devices –are products, equipment or technological aids used by people with disabilities that help prevent, relieve or neutralize a disability. Such devices include, but are not limited to: walkers, magnification devices, or personal oxygen tanks.

Service Animal – an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if: it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or, if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. Service animals may be used by people with low vision, low hearing, autism, mental health disabilities, and/or physical or dexterity disabilities.

Support Person –in relation to a person with a disability, a support person is someone who accompanies him or her in order to assist with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs.

Customer Service Standards

1. Accessibility to Library Services and Facilities

- a) The Library will permit people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a service animal. Service animals will be permitted to remain with its owner at all times while they are in the Library.
- b) The Library will permit people with disabilities to enter Library facilities accompanied by a support person. The Library will not prevent any person with a disability from having full access to their support personnel while they are in the Library.

The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of other persons in the Library. The Library will not make such a requirement without consulting the person with the disability and only after considering the following situations:

- i. When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or other persons in the Library;
 - ii. That risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
 - iii. That any potential risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
 - iv. The assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and,
 - v. The assessment of the risk is based upon the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.
- c) The Library will provide advance notice of fees payable for a Library service. The Library will waive program fees, when practicable, for support persons assisting clients.
 - d) The Library will provide public notice of all temporary interruptions to the availability of Library services or facilities. (Please refer to the *Procedure to be Followed in the Event of Temporary Disruptions to Library Services*)

- e) The Library will permit people with disabilities to bring their personal assistive devices into Library facilities.
- f) The Library will ensure that Library staff have the proper training in order to effectively illustrate the use of the assistive equipment that the Library has available to assist people with disabilities.

2. Communications

The Library will make every effort to make its communications accessible by (refer to the *Procedure to Ensure Accessible Communications*):

- i. Making original communications more accessible through plain language;
- ii. Changing the usual method of communication to meet an individual's need;
- iii. Through the use of assistive devices or services.

The Library will ensure that patrons are made aware of its *Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy* (refer to the *Procedure to Ensure Public Awareness of the Accessible Customer Service Standard*).

The Library will provide the *Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy*, upon request, in alternate formats (refer to the *Procedure to Ensure Public Awareness of the Accessible Customer Service Standard*).

The Library will follow a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities. The Library shall make information about the process readily available to the public (refer to the *Procedure to Receive and Respond to Feedback Regarding Library Accessibility*).

3. Accessible Library Services

Facility

The Library's main facility is accessible to people using wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. There are two accessible parking spots. The main entrances are at street level. There are automatic doors at all entrances, as well as on both fully accessible washrooms. Aisles within the facility are large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters. There is an elevator. Elevator buttons have raised symbols and Braille text. There are two accessible washrooms equipped with railings and with strobe fire alarm signals. Washroom fittings are at appropriate heights for patrons using a wheelchair. The sinks have levers to facilitate ease of use. The steps of the interior stairwell are marked with bright yellow paint. The service desks are designed so that wheelchairs may fit beneath the desk surfaces. Signage was deliberately designed to be clear and easily read. Signage incorporates the international symbols of accessibility.

Collections

The Cobourg Public Library shall provide, or arrange for the provision of accessible materials where they exist. Library staff shall inform the public of the availability of accessible materials, and provide this information in an accessible format or appropriate communication support upon request. (See Procedure to Ensure Accessible Communications)

The Library's collection includes print materials in large print. There are also audiobooks, e-books, electronic audiobooks, CD's, and DVD's. Some DVD's have descriptive video and/or closed captioning.

Services

The Library has a wheelchair, as well as walkers, available for the use of patrons.

For patrons with low or no vision the Library offers the following services and resources: the use of a CCTV; a computer workstation with assistive software and hardware.

The Library delivers materials to patrons who are temporarily, or permanently, homebound.

4. Training (refer to the *Training Procedure Regarding the Provision of Library Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities*)

All members of staff, all volunteers and all third parties, who deal with members of the public on behalf of the Library will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities.

All persons who participate in developing the Library's policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to members of the public or other third parties will receive the appropriate level of training about the provision of Library goods and services to persons with disabilities.

The training will include:

- a) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the 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 a support person;
- d) Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at the Library that may help people with disabilities access the Library's services; and,

- e) Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Library's services.

Training will be provided to all new employees and volunteers as part of the orientation process. All existing employees will receive the appropriate training on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies and procedures governing the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

A record of training provided to Library staff and volunteers, including the dates on which the training is provided, and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be maintained.