

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Niagara Falls Public Library</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date Effected January 1, 2010</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accessibility Policy Standards for</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Corporate</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Last Reviewed April 21, 2010</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Customer Service</b></p>

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Library

- provides all library services, resources and facilities in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities,
- is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and is consistent with the City of Niagara Falls Accessible Customer Service Standard Compliance Policy.

## SCOPE:

This part of the policy addresses accessibility policies and standards specific to customer service. 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 our customers.

## DEFINITIONS:

**“AODA”** means the Accessibility for Ontarians for Disabilities, 2005

**“Assistive Device”** means a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing Library services

**“Core Service Delivery Streams”** means reference, referral and readers' services; collections; lending; technology; and programming and outreach.

**“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 development 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.

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“**Guide Dog**” means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the blind Persons’ Rights Act.

“**Library Premises**” means premises owned and operated, or operated by the Niagara Falls Public Library.

“**Library Services**” means what the Library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a defined set of community needs.

“**Persons who Provide Library Services**” means employees, volunteers, Board member, student placement or person or otherwise engaged in the provision of Library services to our customers, and 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.

“**Service Animal**” means any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons related to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her 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.

“**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.

“**Universal Access**” means to provide access to services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

It is the policy of the Niagara Falls Public Library that the Library is committed to providing quality Library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use Library services.

**1. Guiding Principles**

1.1 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.

1.2 The Library services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

1.3 The Library strives to provide “universal access” to library services for all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design in order to integrate services to persons with disabilities. The Library will offer alternative measures, including trained staff support, where necessary, so that persons with disabilities may obtain and use library services.

**2. Library Service Delivery Streams**

2.1 All Library services in each of the Library service delivery streams and in all service locations are accessible by persons with disabilities.

2.2 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.

**3. Communications with Persons with Disabilities**

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

**4. Temporary Service Disruptions**

The Library will make reasonable effort 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 service, if any, that may be available. In the case of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible.

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**5. Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility**

5.1 A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using Library services. 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 on Library premises. In these situations, the Library may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using Library services, where the Library has such other measures available.

5.2 It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

**6. Service Animals and Guide Dogs**

6.1 Persons with a disability may enter Library premises accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Library will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Library services.

6.2 If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal or a guide dog, Library staff may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status, as outlined above.

6.3 It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal or guide dog is kept in control at all times.

**7. Support Persons**

7.1 A person with a disability may enter Library premises with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

7.2 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 on the Library premises.

7.3 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.

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## **8. Training**

8.1 The Library will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training will be dependent on a person's interactions with Library users.

8.2 The content of the training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the AODA;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07);
- Instructions on Library policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to the provision of Library services to users with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with users with various types of disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Library services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal;
- Information about the equipment or devices available on Library premises that may help with the provision of Library services to persons with disabilities.

8.3 A record of training provided to persons to whom this act applies on the AODA and this policy will be kept by the Chief Librarian or designate.

8.4 Training will be provided as part of orientation training for new employees and on a continuing basis as required.

## **9. Feedback on Services**

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

## **10. Availability of Documents**

10.1 Policy documents will be available on the Library's website.

10.2 Policy documents will be provided, consistent with the requirements of the AODA and Ontario Reg. 429/07.

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**BACKGROUND:**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005) is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations which provides goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

The City of Niagara Falls, Accessible Customer Service Standard Compliance Policy, upon which the Library policy is based, is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

INQUIRIES should be directed to the Chief Librarian