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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2023

POLICY

People should not be excluded from using a public service because they have a disability. Like everybody else, citizens with disabilities pay taxes and contribute to their community in many ways. They therefore have a moral right to take advantages of the wide range of services provided by society.

While most Library Boards and staff may share this view, not all Library facilities and services are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Many Library buildings present discouraging barriers. An original Carnegie building, for example, would be completely inaccessible to someone in a wheelchair. Many Libraries built as late as the 1960s seem to have taken little or no thought for the disabled. Washrooms may be located off the main floor, only accessible by steep stairs. Entrances may have high thresholds, or be placed high above ground level.

In addition to building design, a facility layout with little or no regard for users with disabilities will frequently have narrow aisles or aisles partially blocked by odd bits of furniture, books shelved too high or too low, and workstations too low or Circulation Desks too high to accommodate users in wheelchairs.

Over and above the obvious physical barriers, people with visual- and/or hearing-related disabilities may be largely excluded from using basic Library services, including collection materials and online resources.

Of particular concern to northern Libraries should be the growing number of sniors in their local service population and how barriers to access will become increasingly significant for this important client group.

Developing a Library Accessibility Policy can be, among other things, an exercise in sensitivity, a process of putting oneself in the other person's shoes, or trying to experience the Library from the point of view of someone with a disability.

The following are a number of elements that a public Library might consider including in an Accessibility Policy, and issues that it might address:

General Principles:

- A statement concerning the right of all citizens to equitable access to Library services and to equal treatment by Library staff.

Staff Training:

- A commitment to train Library staff and volunteers to heighten their awareness and sensitivity to the needs of the disabled, and to provide staff with guidelines in serving disabled members of the public.

Format Materials:

- A commitment to provide materials in formats that are usable by people unable to use regular print materials, based on the needs and priorities of the particular community;
- Guidelines concerning the storage and display of special materials, and the provision and use of specialized equipment for using these materials;
- A commitment to cooperate with other Libraries and special services providers (e.g. the Canadian National Institute for the Blind) to provide users with as many choices and the widest selection possible;
- A commitment to consult community residents with disabilities concerning their Library needs and priorities.

Adaptive Technologies:

- A commitment to acquire and make use of technology that helps disabled users to access regular materials (e.g. optical character recognition system, keyboard enhancements, large-screen monitors, character-enlarging software, height-adjustable tables, magnification devices, book holders, etc.);
- Since so many of the newer Library services are delivered by means of computer workstations, a commitment to providing at least one computer workstation with access to the Library's online catalogue and Internet and that includes such adaptive technologies as: a keyboard adapted for persons with disabilities (including visually impaired), a large-screen monitor with adjustable magnification, computer controls at an appropriate height, adequate clear space under the desk for a wheelchair, and sufficient space for a guide dog.

Facilities:

- A commitment to making Library facilities accessible to and safe for persons with disabilities by providing:
 - Signage that is appropriately designed and displayed;
 - Designated parking spaces close to the Library's front entrance;
 - Clear, obstacle-free traffic routes throughout the Library;
 - Aisle widths and shelf heights suitable for wheelchair users;

- An entranceway that is on a level surface with sufficient space for a wheelchair, with a power-assisted door, good lighting, and protection from rain and snow;
- Ramps where there are changes in elevation;
- Stairs with detectable warning surfaces and handrails;
- At least one accessible washroom in all areas open to the public;
- Circulation and Reference/Information Desks that are suitable for serving children and persons in wheelchairs;
- Procedures and warning devices to assist disabled users in the event of an emergency or evacuation.

Web Accessibility:

- A commitment to avoid using features on the Library's website that might create difficulties and unnecessary complications for users with disabilities.

Marketing:

- A commitment to make appropriate organizations and individuals in the community aware of the Library's accessible services.

NOTE: Legislation called the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was passed by the provincial government in 2005. An Accessibility Standards Advisory Council was established to provide advice to help Ontarians achieve an accessible society over the next twenty years. The Council will advise the Minister of Community and Social Services on the development of Accessibility Standards, and this will include Customer Service Standards for Libraries.

1. ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

- 1.1. All citizens of Schreiber have a right to equitable Library and information services;
- 1.2. Library staff shall treat persons with disabilities with the consideration, dignity, and respect to which all patrons are entitled;
- 1.3. The Library shall endeavour to make all Library facilities and services accessible to everybody;
- 1.4. The Library shall, on an ongoing basis, evaluate its services, programs, and collection to ensure their effectiveness and relevance to the needs of all persons in the community;
- 1.5. To help achieve its accessibility goals, the Library shall cooperate with local, provincial, and national groups representing and serving persons with disabilities;
- 1.6. Planning services for persons with disabilities shall be integrated into the Library's overall planning process.

2. STAFF TRAINING

2.1. POLICY

- 2.1.1. The Library shall have in place a training program for existing staff, new employees, and volunteers to heighten awareness and sensitivity and provide information on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities;
- 2.1.2. The training program shall include guidelines for appropriate behaviour with respect to persons with disabilities and these shall be enforced by supervisors and management;
- 2.1.3. Library staff shall be trained and available to help patrons with disabilities use equipment and access materials.

2.2. GOALS

- 2.2.1. The Library has guidelines for appropriate staff behaviour when interacting with persons with disabilities.
- 2.2.2. Library staff are trained in how to help patrons with disabilities use equipment and access materials.

3. ACCESSIBLE FORMAT MATERIALS

3.1. POLICY

- 3.1.1. The Library shall acquire and make available materials usable by patrons with disabilities who have difficulty in using, or who are unable to use, regular print materials;
- 3.1.2. Acquisition of accessible format materials (e.g. Videos, Large Print Books, Talking Books, Braille, etc.) shall be based on the needs of the community and local priorities;
- 3.1.3. Materials in accessible formats should appeal to a variety of interests or needs;
- 3.1.4. Accessible format materials shall be shelved with the rest of the collection, clearly identified for patrons who will be using them, and accessible;
- 3.1.5. Equipment to use accessible format materials shall be available and accessible;
- 3.1.6. The Library shall participate in networks of local, regional, provincial, and

national Libraries and other institutions to ensure availability of accessible format materials through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and cooperative programs;

3.1.7. Where available, the Library will use service providers, e.g. CNIB (the Canadian National Institute for the Blind), for materials in accessible formats;

3.1.8. The Library's accessible format collection shall reflect the needs and priorities of persons in the community with disabilities, as determined through the Library's planning process.

3.2. GOALS

3.2.1. The Library has consulted community residents with disabilities, as well as local organizations that represent and serve persons with disabilities, concerning their needs and priorities with respect to accessible format materials.

3.2.2. The Library has assessed its collection of accessible format materials, as well as equipment for using these materials, to ensure that they are meeting the needs of disabled Library users.

3.2.3. The Library has partnered with CELA - Centre for Equitable Library Access (formerly known as CNIB) to receive deposits of special format talking books and materials in Braille.

4. ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

4.1. POLICY

4.1.1. The Library shall make use of technology that helps to adapt regular Library materials and services for use by persons with disabilities;

4.1.2. In planning the acquisition of special equipment (e.g. optical character recognition system, keyboard enhancements, large-screen monitors, character-enlarging software, height-adjustable tables, magnification devices, book holders, etc.) the Library shall consider:

- Community needs;
- Availability of equipment in local disability centers or other Libraries;
- Cost and reliability of the product.

4.1.3. At least one accessible computer workstation shall be available to patrons with visual, hearing, and motor impairments.

4.2. GOALS

4.2.1. The Library has consulted community residents with disabilities, as well as local organizations that represent and serve persons with disabilities, concerning their needs and priorities with respect to adaptive technologies;

4.2.2. An accessible computer workstation, in an accessible and barrier-free location, is available to patrons with visual, hearing, and motor impairments. This workstation provides access to the Library's OPAC, to CD-ROMS, to the Internet, and to software for personal computer use, and includes the following adaptive technologies:

- A keyboard adapted for persons with disabilities (including visually impaired);
- A large-screen monitor with adjustable magnification;
- Computer controls at an appropriate height (not more than 36");

- Adequate clear space under the desk for a wheelchair (minimum 29"H x 30" W);
- Other features as determined by availability, price, and needs of the community.

This computer workstation provides sufficient space for a guide dog.

5. FACILITIES

5.1. POLICY

5.1.1. The Library shall endeavour to make its facilities accessible to and safe for persons with disabilities.

5.2. GOALS Met

5.2.1. Signs and Directional Guides

- All accessible areas are designated by the international symbol of accessibility for persons with disabilities and the symbols representing these facilities: washrooms, telephones, entrances and exits, elevators, ramps, accessible service areas in the Library, emergency areas and equipment, parking spaces.
- Signs are placed so they may be seen easily by wheelchair patrons.

5.2.2. Parking

- At least ten percent of parking spaces are designated for accessibility;
- Signs designating accessible parking spaces are clearly visible at the entrance of the parking area.
- Parking spaces for persons with disabilities are located on the shortest possible circulation route to an accessible entrance.

5.2.3. Paths and Walkways

- Paths to travel to and from accessible areas run on a continuous plane (uninterrupted by steps or abrupt changes in level, obstacle-free, and slip-resistant).
- Ramps are provided for all changes in elevation.
- All potential hazards, such as staircases, changes in level, turns, etc., are made obvious to visually impaired persons.

5.2.4. Entrances and Exits

- The entrance area is on a level surface with sufficient space for the door to swing open freely and for anybody in a wheelchair, on crutches, or using a walker to approach it without difficulty.
- A power-assisted or automatic door is provided at the main entrance.
- The entrance is well-lit so that persons with diminished vision will be able to find their footing and read directional and informational signs after dark.
- A permanent shelter over the entrance provides protection from snow and rain, and also prevents snow and ice build-up that could impede operation of the automatic doors. (Target Date: 2019)

5.2.5. Stairs

- All stairs have detectable warning surfaces at the top of the stairs in a colour and texture contrasting with the surrounding flooring.

5.2.6. Ramps

A ramp is provided wherever there are changes in elevation on walkways, corridors, access routes, or parking lots.

5.2.7. Handrails

- A handrail is provided for the full length of every staircase;
- Handrail extensions are provided at the top of stairs as tactile cues for persons with visual impairments.
- Handrails are of a colour that contrasts with the wall so that they can be seen easily by persons with impaired vision.

5.2.8. Washrooms

- All areas open to the public have at least one accessible washroom;
- Directional signs for accessible washrooms are placed in several locations and in such a way as to make them comprehensible to persons with visual disabilities.

5.2.9. Emergency Systems

- Well-rehearsed procedures are in place for the swift, efficient evacuation of all persons with disabilities during an emergency. (2019)
- A system of detectable warnings is in place for fire, evacuation, or other emergencies that require immediate response, including audible alarm signals and flashing strobe lights. These are provided in the following areas: restrooms, general usage areas, hallways, and lobbies.

5.2.10. Circulation Area

- One section of the Circulation Desk is low enough (between 29"H and 34"H) to service children and persons in wheelchairs;
- There is adequate clear space under the lower part of the Circulation Desk to accommodate a wheelchair (minimum 30" W x 20" D x 29"H).

5.2.11. Catalogue Access

- At least one accessible computer workstation, with adequate space around and under it to accommodate wheelchair users, is available for catalogue use. Pathways to the computer workstation are adequate and unobstructed;
- The Library provides remote access to the Library's catalogue for users who are unable, or find it difficult, to come to the Library.

5.2.12. Collection Use

- Library staff are trained and available to assist patrons with disabilities;
- Aisles between stacks are at least 36" W;
- The maximum height of shelves is 60", and the minimum height is 12"; (2019) (Shelves holding alternative format materials are labelled with tactile identifiers.) (2019)
Spine labels are printed in characters that are large, dark, and easy to read;
- Filing cabinets for public use are lateral and no more than 54" from the floor. (Target Date: under review)

6. MARKETING

6.1. POLICY

6.1.1. The Library shall endeavour to make local residents with disabilities aware of the services the Library provides.

6.2. GOALS

6.2.1. The Library produces a list of its accessible services and distributes it to the appropriate individuals and organizations;

6.2.2. The Library hosts an Accessibility Day once a year where the media is invited to attend along with groups in the community representing persons with disabilities.
(2019)

Notice of Planned Service Disruption – Schreiber Public Library

There will be a scheduled service disruption at Schreiber Public Library due to *(Indicate Reason, e.g. electrical work is being carried out and power will be turned off)* impacting the delivery of goods and services for our customers **on (date)**.

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location)*
2. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location)*
3. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location)*
4. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location)*
5. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location)*

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

1. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location, Date, Time)*
2. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location, Date, Time)*
3. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location, Date, Time)*
4. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location, Date, Time)*
5. *(Service/Event Name)* *(Location, Date, Time)*

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused.

Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call *(Contact Number)*.

Notice of Unplanned Service Disruption – Schreiber Public Library

Due to unforeseen circumstances due to *(Indicate Reason, e.g. weather conditions)*, there is a service disruption at Schreiber Public Library impacting the delivery of goods and services for our customers **from (time)**.

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. *(Service)*
2. *(Service)*
3. *(Service)*
4. *(Service)*
5. *(Service)*

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>(Service/Event Name)</i> | <i>(Location, Date, Time)</i> |
| 2. <i>(Service/Event Name)</i> | <i>(Location, Date, Time)</i> |
| 3. <i>(Service/Event Name)</i> | <i>(Location, Date, Time)</i> |
| 4. <i>(Service/Event Name)</i> | <i>(Location, Date, Time)</i> |
| 5. <i>(Service/Event Name)</i> | <i>(Location, Date, Time)</i> |

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused.

Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call *(Contact Number)*.

SCHREIBER PUBLIC LIBRARY

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for visiting Schreiber Public Library. We value all of our patrons and strive to meet everybody's needs. Your feedback is important to us.

To help us better serve you by providing Accessible Customer Service, please complete our Feedback Form using this form or by asking us for this form in alternative formats.

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? YES NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES SOMEWHAT (please explain) NO (please explain)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES SOMEWHAT (please explain) NO (please explain)

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact Information (Optional):

Thank you,

Schreiber Public Library.