

**DATE OF LAST REVISION: JAN. 2010****POLICY/PROCEDURE TYPE:****PUBLIC SERVICE****REVIEW SCHEDULE: 3 YEARS**

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**PURPOSE**

Markham Public Library is committed to responding to the needs of all its customers. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of the community and respond by providing services and facilities that are inclusive and accessible to all.

The Library will promote accessibility through this policy and by ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed. To do this we must ensure that our policies, procedures and practices address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.

**PRINCIPLES**

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- That services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the services.

**PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES**

Procedures and practices will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- Communication will be considered, in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.
  - Staff will receive appropriate training related to accessible customer service in relation to their role.
  - People with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by Markham Public Library that are open to the public.
  - Persons with disabilities, accompanied by a support person, will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public.
  - Where admission fees are charged for support persons, advance notice will be given.
  - Notice will be provided when facilities or services that are normally accessible to people with disabilities are temporarily disrupted.
  - People can offer feedback on how the Library is providing services to persons with a disability by contacting the Administration Centre. .
  - Markham Public Library will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Library.
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**SUPPORT PERSONS**

Support person means another person who accompanies a person with disabilities in order to help him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with accessing goods or services.

Markham Public Library will allow people with disabilities who require it, to be accompanied by a support person in all libraries. (The Library reserves the right to request that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.)

- Members of public should notify a staff member of the presence of the support person.
- Where admission fees are charged for support persons, advance notice will be given.
- If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

**FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Should a customer wish to make a complaint regarding the service they have received, complaints or concerns may be outlined in person, via e-mail or telephone to:

- The Manager of the Library where services were provided; or
- The Director, Service Excellence
- The information to be provided should include personal contact information, the date, a description of the incident or situation, and what action is being requested to resolve the situation. This information and the resolution will be recorded in the Library's Issue Management Database.
- The Branch Manager will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the Director, Service Excellence.
- The customer will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.

Should a customer wish to provide the Library with a suggestion on how to improve our service:

- The customer can contact the Director, Service Excellence and provide suggestions via email, telephone or in person.
- All suggestions will be recorded in the Issue Management Database.
- The customer will be notified in a timely manner of how the Library will proceed with their suggestion.
- Staff response will include: an explanation of how the suggestion will be implemented, a response indicating further investigation or an explanation why the Library is unable to implement the suggestion.

All complaints and suggestions will be recorded and forwarded to the responsible Branch Manager.

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**SERVICE DISRUPTION**

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the Library, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the Library (for example, elevators) and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Library shall give notice of the disruption in the form and manner established by the Library.

Notice of the disruption shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place in the affected facility, as well as by posting it on the Library's website.

If the Library's website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the service disruption section of this policy, shall be provided on the website.

**SERVICE ANIMALS**

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- A "guide dog," as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*, or
- A "service animal" for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, 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 the reasons relating to his or her disability.

The Library will allow the person and the animal onto all Library facilities, and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services.

**FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS**

Should the Library be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Library will give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Library will contain a note indicating, "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

The Library and the person with a disability will try to agree upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy.

**Alternative Formats:**

Requests for alternative formats will be honoured in the most practical manner depending on the media chosen, the size and complexity of the document, the quality and source of the documents, the feasibility of the request (including the cost) and the number of documents to be converted.

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It should be noted that when a request for one of these formats is received and deemed feasible, staff will make every attempt to respond to the request in the most practical manner and to the satisfaction of the requestor. If it is determined that the format requested is not feasible, then other alternative methods of providing the information will be explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor (e.g. explaining the information verbally etc.).

- Staff member receives request from member of the public for alternative format.
- Employee fills out alternative format request form.
- Forwards request on to the responsible manager.
- The responsible manager, and the Director, Service Excellence will determine feasibility; if feasible -
- Proceeds with alternative format request.
- If not feasible; contacts individual with feasible solution.

Feasibility will be determined based upon cost in relation to size of document and time associated with processing the document request.

The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

Conversion will be processed in-house wherever possible. When a member of the public requests a piece of Library documentation in an alternate format, the Library (and not the public requestor) shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion to the alternate format.

For greater clarity, if a request by a person with a disability is made pursuant to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Act, the requester shall be responsible for payment of the prescribed fee but not for any costs associated with conversion to an alternate format.

In-house printing, where possible, shall adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards.

## **TRAINING**

The Library shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its materials or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Library, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing the Library's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of materials or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this policy and instruction about the following matters:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability, as
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outlined in this policy and procedures.

- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the Library's premises or otherwise provided by the Library that may help with the provision of materials or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Library's materials or services.

The Library will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, and how the training was completed.

When there are changes to policies, practices and procedures, updated training will occur.

#### **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

The Library will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Library. Should a person with a disability be unable to access the Library's services through the use of their own personal assistive devices, the Library will ensure the following measures:

- Determine if service is inaccessible, based upon individual requirements.
  - Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
  - Notify person with disability of alternative service and how they can access the service, temporarily or on a permanent basis.
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