

2019-2021

**MARKHAM  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ACCESSIBILITY  
PLAN**

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MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# Markham Public Library Accessibility Plan 2019-2021

## Our Commitment

Markham Public Library's vision is to be the place where Markham's diverse communities come together to imagine, create, learn and grow. To this end, Markham Public Library is committed to providing service in a way that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities, fosters inclusion, and strives to identify, prevent and remove barriers to access and participation.

Markham Public Library commits to meeting its responsibilities under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in the following ways:

- communicating information through a variety of channels to account for the different needs of our customers;
- creating a welcoming and respectful environment in all our spaces, physical or virtual;
- designing and maintaining public spaces that can be navigated inclusively;
- delivering content in a variety of formats;
- delivering programs and services that accommodate the needs of library users with disabilities;
- championing community services and resources that foster inclusion and barrier-free access;
- providing the appropriate accommodations for staff and volunteers to undertake their responsibilities;
- maintaining feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement in the area of accessibility.

## Background

### **Accessibility Planning Supports Markham Public Library's Vision, Mission, and Strategy.**

Markham Public Library is guided by its Vision, Mission, and Strategy.

Markham Public Library's vision sees the library as the place where all of Markham communities come together to **imagine**, **create**, **learn** and **grow**.

Markham Public Library's mission ensures that we provide everyone in the community the opportunity for success and that resources, staff, programs and spaces enrich the lives of everyone in Markham.

Markham's strategic goals are to connect people and community; ensure digital inclusion; provide content that transforms lives; and act as community learning hubs.

Accessibility planning at Markham Public Library meets the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and helps Markham Public Library to develop services that align with its strategic direction. All community members benefit when services are developed that are inclusive, accessible, and barrier-free.

## Ontario Laws Require Accessibility Plans

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in 2005. The AODA sets out accessibility requirements that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces. These are called standards. The Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards were all combined under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)<sup>1</sup>.

One of the IASR requirement is to that all public sector organizations, as well as private and non-profit organizations with 50 or more employees must develop statements of commitment to accessibility and make them publicly available, create written accessibility policies and make them publicly available, create written multi-year accessibility plans, update them at least once every five years and post them on their websites. Each year the organization must report on the progress implementing the plan<sup>2</sup>.

## Access and Disability in Markham

In Canada an estimated 3.8 million adult Canadians reported being restricted in their daily activities due to a disability. This represents 13.7% of the adult population or one in seven adults with a disability<sup>3</sup>. Pain, mobility, and flexibility limitations are the most commonly experienced disabilities. Over 11% of Canadian adults have experienced a pain, mobility, or flexibility disability. The next most commonly reported disabilities were mental/psychological; dexterity; hearing; seeing; and memory and learning disabilities in order of most frequently reported.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>

The City of Markham has a population of 353,899 meaning that within the City of Markham there are 47,776 adults in Markham who live with a disability.

Table 1  
Prevalence of disability by type, Markham, 2016

Disability type	Canadian percentage	Markham number
Adults living with a disability	13.7	47,776
Pain	9.7	34,328
Flexibility	7.6	26,896
Mobility	7.2	25,480
Mental/psychological	3.9	13,802
Dexterity	3.5	12,386
Hearing	3.2	11,324
Seeing	2.7	9,555
Memory	2.3	8,139
Learning	2.3	8,139
Developmental	0.6	2,123

*Statistics on disability from Statistics Canada 2012 survey on disability<sup>4</sup>.*

Statistics show that as Canadians age they are more likely to experience a disability. The average age of onset of a disability is early forties<sup>5</sup>. As the Markham population continues to grow in number and in age Markham will see higher number of its residents living with a disability. These numbers demonstrate how important it is that Markham Public Library continues to develop its resources and services to meet the needs of community.

### Children and Disability in Markham

In 2006, 3.7% percent of Canadian children under the age of 15 reported having one or more disabilities.<sup>6</sup> As this statistic was last measured over a decade ago this percentage is a conservative estimate. There are a total of 58,873 children under the age of 15 in the City of Markham, 2,178 who live with a reported disability. Families with children with disability report that parents experience elevated stress over the health of their child, stress related to balancing their obligations as a caregiver, and stress related to a perception of what they should be doing for their child. Families with children with disability (19.1%) are also more likely to fall below the Low-Income Cut-Off than families with children without a disability (13%)<sup>7</sup>. These numbers show that the library has an important role to play in supporting children with a disability and their families.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017008-eng.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2008009-eng.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2008009-eng.htm>

# Developing a Plan through Consultation

Developing Markham Public Library’s accessibility plan involved the time and expertise of many contributors. Markham Public Library consulted with community members with disabilities, customers with inside and outside of our library branches, support workers of children and youth with disabilities, caregivers, industry experts, and a team of employees from across the library system.

Using this consultative approach meets the requirements laid out by the AODA, and it also aligns with Markham Public Library’s ongoing practice of consulting the community to learn about resident’s needs and priorities and how Markham Public Library can best support them in meeting creating the life they want.

## Exploring Best Practices

Markham Public Library’s employee team conducted analyses of best practice within the library and education industries, best practice in accessibility, reviewed legislative requirements, and conducted a needs assessment as part of creating the accessibility plan.

## The Actions

Recommendations from consultation were combined with information about legislation, and accessibility best practice to create the list of recommendations included in Markham Public Library’s Accessibility Plan.

# Accessible Services

Markham Public Library has a wide range of accessible services available to users, and is constantly working to enhance our accessible collections and services.

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>VictorReader Stratus</b>	Plays DAISY format audio and MP3 CDs.
<b>Magnifier (Pending)</b>	Can be used to magnify material in branch.
<b>Kurzweil 3000 Software with scanner</b>	Provides low vision customers the opportunity to have text read to them.
<b>Large print keyboard</b>	Large typeface on the keys for greater visibility.
<b>BrowseAloud</b>	Using the Kurzweil 3000, BrowseAloud makes websites more accessible and reader-friendly for those who require online reading support
<b>Collections</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Large Print</b>	Books with large print. Large Print books are available at all locations.

<b>AudioBook CDs</b>	Books on disc. Books can listened to on a CD player. AudioBooks are available at all locations.
<b>Playaways</b>	MP3 Players preloaded with audio. Once-click listening
<b>eAudioBooks</b>	Downloadable audiobooks that can be accessed from any location.
<b>eBooks</b>	Downloadable audiobooks that can be accessed from any location.
<b>Toys</b>	A collection of toys that enhance children's learning through play.
<b>Services</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Extended hours</b>	The library has extended open hours on Fridays, and on Sunday mornings.
<b>One-on-one computer tutorials</b>	In person computer tutorials are delivered tailored to meet the learning need of the individual.
<b>TextTTY</b>	Provides hearing-impaired customers the opportunity to communicate with MPL staff from their homes. Facilitates two-way communication through text rather than voice.
<b>Work Experience Program</b>	A volunteer opportunity specifically designed to provide work experience to youth with a disability.
<b>Profile for persons with disability</b>	A fine free profile provided to customers with a disability.

## 2018 Accessibility Achievements

Markham Public Library works ongoing to make its resources and services more accessible to its community members. Markham Public Library is proud of the following accessibility accomplishments completed in 2018:

- Developed an Accessibility Commitment to guide Markham Public Library's work on accessibility.
- Revised and expanded the Customer Service Standard training for all library employees and volunteers. This training combines the required AODA Customer Service Standard content with a library-specific lens and a framework that encourages all library employees to act as advocates for individuals with disabilities within library spaces.

- Revised procedures for registering customers for Centre for Equitable Library Access services. Conducted training for all branch staff on Centre for Equitable Library Access ensuring staff are able to spread awareness of the service.
- Developed and launched the Homebound Service to provide access of library material to customers that are unable to access a branch in person.
- Revised Accessibility Policies.
- Expanded eResources Collection.
- Developed and launched a borrowing profile for persons with disabilities.

## The Plan Aligns with AODA Standards

The actions outlined in the *Markham Public Library Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2021* are organized by AODA Standards. Actions are specific to AODA requirements and take Markham Public Library's accessibility plans beyond compliance.

## The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

<b><u>ACTIONS: LEADERSHIP</u></b>	Proposed Timelines		
	2019	2020	2021
<b>Create an accessibility plan to identify accessibility objectives. Review these objectives yearly and share information on accomplishments.</b>	*		
<b>Designate an Accessibility Committee whose members are responsible for Markham Public Library's work on accessibility activities.</b>	*		
<b>Earmark funding for accessibility activities in Markham Public Library's annual business plan and budget.</b>		*	
<b>Develop a process to ensure that organizational planning decisions consider impacts on people with disabilities.</b>		*	

<b><u>ACTIONS: COMMUNICATIONS</u></b>	Proposed Timelines		
	2019	2020	2021
<b>Include a statement welcoming those of all abilities on public facing communications for programs and services.</b>	*		
<b>Ensure that communications materials reflect people with a wide range of abilities.</b>		*	
<b>Update Markham Public Library website to include current accessible services and collections.</b>	*		

Commit to using CNIB's Clear Print guidelines for printed material created in house.	*		
Develop a marketing and information sharing campaign in collaboration with CELA targeting non-users.	*		
Develop accessible emergency procedures.	*		
Develop practices for planning and conducting accessible meetings and events.		*	
Review and update communication practices and products on a scheduled basis to improve accessibility to people with a wide range of abilities.			*

<b><u>ACTIONS: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</u></b>	<b>Proposed Timelines</b>		
	2019	2020	2021
Create ongoing accessibility-related professional development opportunities available to all employees.		*	
Integrate accessibility and inclusivity components into all customer service and programming training.		*	
Consult people with disabilities in the development and review of accessibility related training programs.	*	*	*
Provide opportunities for employees to interact with, and learn from, the disability community.		*	
Develop process for peer-to-peer sharing of accessibility related resources for employees.	*		

<b><u>ACTIONS: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES</u></b>	<b>Proposed Timelines</b>		
	2019	2020	2021
Create documented procedures to encourage the employment of qualified individuals with a wide range of abilities.	*		
Offer specialized recruitment training on the recruitment of people with disabilities to employees involved in the recruitment process.		*	

<b><u>ACTIONS: GOODS AND SERVICES</u></b>	<b>Proposed Timelines</b>		
	2019	2020	2021
Create programming aimed at developing the life skills of youth and adult with disabilities.		*	
Develop core programs that are tailored to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities.	*		
Enter into the Access 2 program allowing support people into programs at no additional charge.	*		
Expand services to provide informational resources and social supports to those with disability and their families.		*	

Develop programming that is tailored to develop technology skills of those with a disability.			*
Include toys that meet the specific needs of children with disabilities in Markham Public Library's Toy Libraries.	*		
Implement an ongoing review of the accessibility of services and programs.			*
Actively seek feedback on the accessibility of products and services from people with disabilities.	*	*	*
Create a process for those who are unable to access the physical branch to acquire library memberships.	*		
Install screen reading technology at all library branches.	*		

**ACTIONS: PHYSICAL SPACES**

**Proposed Timelines**

	2019	2020	2021
Conduct audits to review current accessibility barriers in existing physical spaces.	*		
Create a documented action plan to address current accessibility barriers in our physical spaces.		*	
Consult people with disabilities in the review of project plans for physical spaces.			*
Earmark funding for tools and technologies that improve the experience of the library's physical spaces for people with disabilities in annual budgets.		*	

**Share Your Thoughts**

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the Markham Public Library Accessibility Plan and accessibility in general. To request a copy of the plan in another format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

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