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Policy Type: Operational

Last Review/Revision:

Policy Title: Accessible Customer Service

Year of Next Review: 2018

Intent

This policy addresses the accessibility requirements of *Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Scope

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 a volunteer, employee, Board member, student on placement or otherwise engaged in the provision of Library services to our customers.

Definitions

Assistive Device: a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing library services.

Barrier: defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

Disability: defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is:

- 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impairment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other appliance or device
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental 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*.

Service Animal: defined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*. 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.

Support Person: defined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*. A support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Policy Statement

The Renfrew Public Library (RPL) is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community. RPL remains dedicated to providing barrier-free access to all library goods, services, information and resources for persons with disabilities.

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 received Royal Assent on June 13, 2005. This Act applies to public and private sector organizations and mandates the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards. The first standard to become law was the Accessible Customer Service Regulation 429/07 which came into force on January 1, 2008. Providers of goods or services in Ontario in the public sector were required to comply with the regulation by January 1, 2010.

Operating Principles

1. Assistive Devices

The Library will encourage the use of personal **assistive devices** to access our services and programs.

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 the disability, or to the health and safety of others on Library premises.

2. Support Persons

The Library will encourage the inclusion and access of **support persons** accompanying people with disabilities.

Fees for support persons assisting users will be waived for library programs where fees are charged.

3. Service Animals

The Library permits service animals to assist users.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, and complaints are received from other customers, Library staff may ask the customer for confirmation of the animal's accreditation.

It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure that his/her service animal is kept in control at all times.

4. Service Disruptions

Notice of Service disruptions: Reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities. In the event of a planned disruption to facilities or services, advance notice will be provided.

Information will include the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services (if available).

Notice may be posted in conspicuous place on library premises (i.e. front door), on the library website or by other such methods that are reasonable under the circumstances.

In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

5. AODA Policies

The Accessible Customer Service Policy will be made available, upon request, in alternative formats free of charge.

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

6. Feedback Process

A feedback, response and tasking process that enables increased integration of users and accessibility to goods and services. Responses to persons with disabilities will take into account the person's disability.

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 available methods.

7. Assistive Services

The Library provides additional services for people with disabilities including, but not limited to:

- Material in alternate formats
- Accessible computer workstation
- Staff assistance to retrieve materials

8. Training

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

Training will include the following:

- Review of the purpose of AODA
- 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 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.

A record of training will be provided to persons to whom this act applies and a copy kept in the employee's personnel file.

Training will be provided as part of the orientation process for new employees and on a continuing basis as required for all others.

Related Documents:

- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11*
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*