



2023-2027 Accessibility Plan

Introduction

This Plan meets the needs of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA, 2001), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). The Plan shows the steps being taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in our library.

Background

Ontarians with Disabilities Act of 2001

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law by the Ontario Legislature on December 4, 2001. The purpose of the Act is “to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province”. The ODA applies to all municipalities, hospitals, district school boards, colleges, universities, public transportation organizations, the Ontario Government, ministries and agencies.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act of 2005 (AODA)

The AODA received Royal Assent in the Ontario Legislature in June 2005. The AODA focuses on improving accessibility in buildings and spaces, employment, customer service, communications and transportation. The AODA intends to:

- make an accessible Ontario on or before January 1, 2025; and
- create and make mandatory and enforceable accessibility standards to be achieved within five years or less.

Description of Oshawa Public Libraries

Oshawa Public Libraries (OPL) enriches the lives and potential of the people of Oshawa by connecting them to the world of information and to each other.

OPL provides free library service to the citizens of Oshawa through four (4) branch libraries (McLaughlin, John Aker Northview, Delpark Homes Centre, and Jess Hann) as well as a visiting library service for the homebound, and virtual library service 24/7 through our website <http://oshawalibrary.ca>.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

OPL has continued to comply with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (O. Reg. 429/07).

Initiatives include:

- Accessibility policy, accessibility plan, and feedback process implemented and posted to website
- All staff have received training on the Customer Service standard and the Human Rights Code
- Visiting Library Service program to serve customers unable to visit the Library due to mobility issues
- Accessible computer stations implemented including adjustable height access to online catalogue
- Screen reading software, Text to Speech software and screen magnification software
- Large print collection
- Electronic titles (eBooks, eAudiobooks, electronic magazines, etc.)
- Portable digital readers such as a Victor Readers
- CELA
- Accessible, automatic sliding glass doors in the main lobby at main branch and at Delpark branch. Wheelchair accessible entrances at all locations
- Library website updated to meet WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards
- Removal of overdue fines for children and teen materials
- Digital library card

Information and Communications

OPL is committed to providing information and communications to its employees and customers with disabilities in a manner that considers their individual accessibility

needs. This commitment will be achieved through an accessible feedback process, the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for Library meetings, programs, and an accessible website.

Initiatives include:

- Materials available in a wide variety of formats, including print, spoken word audio, described video, and electronic
- Improved collection signage to make the signs more visible and clearer
- Fonts more readable on all spine labels
- Library website updated to meet WCAG 2.0, Level AA compliance standards
 - Remediate documents such as Events newsletter and Annual Reports before posting on website
- Adoption of position statement on: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Employment

OPL is committed to fostering a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and accessible work environment for all employees. This commitment is supported through accessible and inclusive recruitment and hiring practices, providing appropriate and timely workplace accommodations, and ensuring the individual accessibility needs of our employees with disabilities are taken into consideration when participating in performance management, career development, and return-to-work programs.

Initiatives include:

- Individualized Accommodation plans at OPL
- Partner with the Durham District School Board and Durham Catholic School Board, and Durham Continuing Education for student placements of all abilities
- Partner with the Abilities Centre for vocational training with young adults
- Mental Health First Aid and CPI de-escalation training
- EFAP program for staff

Self-Service Kiosk

OPL strives to meet the needs of its customers with disabilities and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Initiatives include:

- Self-service kiosks available in all branches

Training

OPL is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

Initiatives include:

- All staff and volunteers received training on the AODA legislation, IASR-Customer Service Standard and the Human Rights Code

Design of Public Spaces

OPL is committed to providing accessible, inclusive spaces for its employees and customers by incorporating the barrier-free requirements under the Ontario Building Code, the technical requirements under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards and the City of Oshawa's Accessibility Design Standards.

Initiatives include:

- Redesigned service counters (2014)
- Accessible ramp to McLaughlin branch children's patio (2016)
- Accessible washroom in McLaughlin branch children's department (2016)
- Accessibility lift in the McLaughlin branch auditorium (2018)
- Received an Accessibility Award from the City of Oshawa (2017)
- Installed Blind Square beacons at McLaughlin branch (2018)
- Replaced accessibility ramp at McLaughlin branch (2019)
- Replaced pavers at Northview branch with concrete walkway (2022)
- Replaced doorknobs with levers in staff areas (2022)

Accessibility Plans 2023 – 2027

Customer Service

- Continued expansion of our digital collection (ongoing)
- Continued updates to the library website to ensure WCAG, Level AA standard (ongoing)
- Review customer service policy to ensure policies are inclusive and promote delivery of accessible customer service
- Establish a process for identifying, providing, maintaining, and supporting the use of assistive hardware and software that meets the information and communication needs of employees and customers with disabilities

Information and Communications

- Develop a digital accessibility standard template for staff to help guide digital communications (2024)
- Updating the accessibility plan and accessibility policy (ongoing)

Employment

- Continue providing an accommodated barrier-free recruitment, hiring, onboarding and training process (ongoing)
- Update Individualized Accommodation and Emergency Plans annually (ongoing)
- Continue co-op/job placements for youth with disabilities (ongoing)

Self-Service Kiosks

- When procuring new self-service kiosks such as remote book lockers, accessibility features will be incorporated into the procurement process (2024)

Training

- Continue providing AODA, IASR and Human Rights Code training to new staff and volunteers, and refresher training to existing staff (ongoing)

Design of Public Spaces

- Refurbish McLaughlin branch elevator (2024)
- Replace McLaughlin branch main entrance stairs and accessible ramp (2025)
- Add enhanced accessibility features to public washrooms at the John Aker Northview branch (2026)
- Add equipment to provide hybrid program option in McLaughlin auditorium (2024)
- Include accessible features when planning new library branch

Oshawa Public Libraries Accessibility Plan will be reviewed annually and updated at least every five years.

For More Information

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