

2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In Accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

July 2021

Alternative formats available upon request.

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Message from CEO & Statement of Commitment

Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or the AODA.

Introduction

In 2005, the Ontario government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or the AODA. The goal of the AODA is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. To achieve this goal, the Government of Ontario created standards in five key areas of life: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. The standards support the principles of the AODA to ensure dignity, integration, independence, and equal opportunity. Compliance with the AODA and its Standards is a mandatory requirement for both private and public sector organizations.

The AODA recognizes that people with disabilities are vibrant, important, and a growing part of the Ontario population. By removing barriers to participation that exist in Ontario, the AODA seeks to maximize both the inclusivity of our society and the value that people with disabilities contribute to our economy.

This accessibility plan outlines the steps Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Our plan shows how Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

1. How Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will provide equal opportunity for people with disabilities to obtain, use and benefit from Library services and programs.

- Created and implemented an Accessible Customer Service Standard policy
- Training on the customer service standards is completed for all existing staff and is included in the orientation for new staff
- Training on the integrated standards and Human Rights Code rolled out to existing staff is included in the orientation for new staff
- Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives provides access to material in a variety of formats that are suited to accommodate those who may have a perceptual disability. These include books on CD, audiobooks, e-books (settings can be adjusted with the majority of our downloadable e-books to suit personal preferences for text size and typeface) through OverDrive and Hoopla, large-print books, and text-to-speech reading capabilities on many of our digital resources.
- The Library purchased iPads that include a Google translate app installed to assist people who are non-verbal or speak different languages
- Staff and members of the public have access to Language Line, which provides translation and sign language video calling services
- The Bowmanville, Courtice, and Newcastle Branches of the Library have wheeled accessibility walkers, or Rollators
- Hearing loops, anti-tremor mouse adapters, and accessible keyboards are available at all Library locations
- Established a process for posting service disruptions for the public to the Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives website and social media sites
- Established a feedback process that includes enabling members of the public to comment on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.
 - Feedback can be provided through our website, printed member feedback forms, in-person, by email, mail, telephone
- Provide documents in alternative formats upon request for a person with a disability

Information and Communication

2. How Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

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- Created Accessible Information and Communications policy to incorporate all requirements of the Information and Communications Standard
- Statement about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports posted on our website
- Key documents posted on the website in an accessible format including Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Accessible Policies
- Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives uses the BrowseAloud screen-reading software on its website. BrowseAloud is accessed through the “Make this Website Talk” link, accessible on every page of the Library’s website through the footer menu. The toolbar automatically “follows” the user as they navigate the Library’s website until the user disables it. BrowseAloud is offered through a web-based toolbar with no software required or expense on behalf of the user. The software was updated in September 2015, providing improved website integration options, a mobile-friendly launch pad, improved help options, and a variety of WCAG (Web-content Accessibility Guidelines)-compliant colours
- Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives’ online quarterly program guide is a fully accessible PDF. The PDF file is created using tags and embedded elements such as links and image descriptors which may be read by screen reading software, improving ease of access and navigation within the document
- Launched Library mobile app in 2014 which makes key information and services already online available anywhere, anytime on Android and Apple devices. Accessibility settings on mobile devices allow for customization to meet user preferences
- A new website will be introduced that meets WCAG 2.0 Level AAA compliance
- Staff regularly evaluate compliance with website accessibility
- Staff receive training on creating accessible documents
- The Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will provide emergency information in an alternative format or with communication supports, upon request

Employment

3. How the Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will make employment practices and its workplace more accessible to potential and existing employees with disabilities.
 - Created an Accessible Employment policy to incorporate all requirements of the Employment Standard
 - Employment Opportunities web page updated to include a statement of availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
 - All job postings include a statement on the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
 - Updated our recruitment process to ensure candidates are notified of the availability of accessibility accommodations when contacted for an interview

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- New employees are notified of the availability of accommodations during their offer of employment
- Notified existing staff of the availability of accessibility accommodations
- Statement of availability of accessibility accommodations included in performance evaluation forms for all staff
- Communicated to all staff that an individualized workplace emergency plan can be developed if requested
- Established a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability, including accommodations necessary for their return to work

Procurement

1. How the Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives will incorporate accessibility design, criteria, and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except where it is not possible to do so.

- Adopted a purchasing policy based on the Municipality of Clarington's purchasing by-law, to ensure staff and vendors comply with AODA requirements
- Our new harmonized website is being created by a vendor that employs an Accessibility Coordinator to ensure content meets WCAG 2.0 Level AAA compliance
- Several accessibility designs were incorporated into the Courtice Branch expansion/renovation including an accessible family washroom with adult-sized change table and automatic door openers, an accessible family washroom, and signage enhancements.
- The Bowmanville Branch recently received an accessibility-designed renovation that includes an accessible family washroom with adult size change table and assistance button, signage enhancements, a variety of sizes and styles of chairs available in the branch, an accessible service counter, and the entrance is wheelchair accessible with wide automatic sliding doors at the entrance

Self-Service Kiosks

- We purchased and installed self-service kiosks in our Courtice and Newcastle branches in September 2013 and in our Bowmanville Branch in 2020. Our Orono Branch had a self-service kiosk installed in 2021. The Self Service Kiosks have a 'High Visibility' option that allows library members to check out items, return items, and check their accounts with a higher contrast background for those with visual disabilities. The Self Service Kiosks also have a font enlarger for library members to view the text on the screen in a larger size as well as multiple languages including but not limited to Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Other

- Consulted with the Municipality of Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee with respect to the accessibility renovation designs for the Orono Branch
- Consulted with the Municipality of Clarington's Accessibility Coordinator on matters relating to the AODA, accessible documents and accommodations.

Section Two: Strategies and Actions Planned for 2021-2026

Customer Service

- Continue to consider accessibility needs when acquiring new collection materials and databases
- Continue on-going compliance with existing obligations
- Continue to receive feedback on the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities and take the appropriate action as required
- Explore industry best practices on providing accessible customer service

Information and Communication

- Ensure all public service documents are accessible
- Post a statement about availability of accessible formats and communication supports at all service counters
- Review feedback processes and update, as required
- Train all staff on creating accessible documents, as required
- Post annual emergency plan to website as an accessible PDF
- Ensure ongoing website compliance
- Provide information in an alternative format or with communication supports, when requested

Employment

- Review and update existing procedure to support employees who need temporary or permanent work accommodation as part of the early and safe return to work policy
- Review and update individual accommodation plans annually
- Continue to take accessibility needs into account through the performance management process, career development/advancement process
- Continue to notify candidates on the availability of accommodations during the recruitment process
- Ensure employees know that disability-related accommodations and emergency plans are available

Procurement

- Continue to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, where possible

Self-Service Kiosks

- Ensure on-going compliance by carefully reviewing all purchases and incorporating accessible features as much as possible

Training

- Continue to train new staff through onboarding and orientation, and existing staff on an ongoing basis, as required
- Provide current staff and volunteers with updated information on changes to our accessibility policies and continue providing accessibility training to all new staff and volunteers
- Continue to ensure that all new contractors are trained
- Review and update existing accessibility training for board members

Future training (still under review) may include the following: (2023-2024)

- AODA Customer Service Standards Refresher Training
- Developing an Inclusive Library Service for Patrons with Print Disabilities
- CELA and accessible library services for kids and teens!
- Universal Design at Your Library
- Improving Workplace Accessibility Training for Leaders
- All about Visual Disabilities: How libraries can support readers who are blind or have low vision
- CELA Frontline Staff Training

Design of Public Spaces

- Waverley Place Museum – a temporary ramp was installed in 2022 at the front of the house to provide wheelchair accessibility to the veranda to ensure the facility is welcoming for everyone. An approved accessibility project will begin in 2024 to provide accessibility improvements, including a permanent ramp and improved exterior walkway/lighting.
- Sarah Jane Williams Heritage Centre - chairs will be purchased in the Fall 2023 to provide accessible seating for guests
- Orono Branch – accessibility renovation plans developed in 2022-2023 will result in:
 - new accessible entrance to the building
 - accessible universal washroom

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- accessible service counter
- Audio induction/hearing loops were purchased using the “Enabling Access Fund” grant to enhance frontline public service for people with hearing disabilities, especially following the pandemic with hygiene shields installed at the service desks. These hearing loops improve the ability for staff to assist members of the public with dignity and privacy.
- Mouse assistive devices (anti-tremor) were also purchased using the “Enabling Access Fund” grant to help members use the computers independently and with dignity. This service has increased the amount of time members can use the computers to complete their work, tasks, or research.
- Ensure we provide accessible seating and mobility aid space in our waiting areas

For more information

For more information on this accessibility plan or to request free accessible formats of this document, please contact Monika Machacek, Chief Executive Officer, of Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives at: mmachacek@clarington-library.on.ca 905-623-7322 ext. 2702.