

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – Richmond Hill Public Library

Statement of Commitment

Richmond Hill Public Library (Library) is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. It is committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

The Library believes in integration, and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. It will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting its accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was enacted to develop, implement, and enforce Accessibility Standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises and transportation throughout Ontario by the year 2025.

Accessibility Standards include the Accessible Customer Service Standard (O. Reg. 429/07), the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) - including the Information & Communication, Employment and the Design of Public Spaces. Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Library is

required to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan.

This plan outlines the Library's strategy to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, and meet its requirements under the IASR. In accordance with the requirements set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, Richmond Hill Public Library will:

- Post the accessibility plan on its website (www.rhpl.ca/accessibility/MYAP);
- Provide the plan in an accessible format upon request;
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years;
- Establish, review and update the accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Library's Accessibility Committee;
- Prepare an annual status report and post it on the Library's website.

Structure & Governance

The responsibility for the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) falls within the Executive Leadership Team at the Richmond Hill Public Library. Accountability for the various clauses within the IASR is a shared responsibility amongst the various RHPL departments.

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring compliance at the corporate level and is the focal point for legislative analysis and subject matter expertise. All departments reporting to the Executive Leadership Team retain the accountability for ensuring their respective clauses

are executed according to the AODA legislative requirements.

General Requirements

Accessibility Policies

The Library shall develop, implement, and maintain policies that the organization will use to meet its requirements of the IASR and achieve accessibility, including a statement of organizational commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

Accessibility Plans

The Library shall implement and maintain this multi-year Accessibility Plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation. The Library shall establish, review and update this Accessibility Plan in consultation with persons with disabilities wherever possible.

Procurement

The Library shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods or services, except where it is not practicable to do so. In situations where the Library has determined that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility when procuring or acquiring goods or services, it shall be prepared to provide an explanation to the public upon request.

Kiosks

Accessibility shall be considered and incorporated in the deployment of interactive kiosks to provide services.

Training

The Library shall ensure that training is provided to all employees on the requirements of the AODA, the IASR, the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The Library shall keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which it is provided.

Customer Service Standards

The Library's policies shall:

- provide for dignity and independence;
- promote integration, unless alternate measures are necessary;
- provide equal opportunity to obtain, use, or benefit from goods and services; and
- indicate training requirements for new employees

Communication Standards

Public libraries

The Library shall provide access to accessible materials where they exist and shall communicate to the public the availability of accessible materials. It also shall provide content in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

Accessible feedback process

The Library shall maintain an accessible feedback process as required by O. Reg. 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The Library shall notify the public about

the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Web content

The Library shall ensure that all web content conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A.

Accessible formats and communication supports

Upon request, the Library shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. This will be done in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. The Library shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats on the Library's website www.rhpl.ca.

Employment

Recruitment

The Library shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes. It also shall consult with the applicant to provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation upon request. The Library shall notify successful applicants when making offers of employment of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Employee accommodation

The Library shall inform its employees of its policies used to support those with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations. This will be

done as soon as is practicable after employment begins. Updated information shall be provided to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies.

Public Spaces

Library buildings are owned by the City of Richmond Hill (City). The City, "...shall incorporate accessibility into public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped on and after January 1, 2016." As a tenant of City buildings, the Library will ensure that it follows the existing requirements stated under the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment).

This includes:

- Elevators and ramps provided as needed
- Automatic doors
- Accessible self-check units and public workstations
- Book stack layouts that are accessible for wheelchairs and motorized scooters
- Accessible service desks
- Adjustable height workstations
- Specialized software and hardware such as JAWS and CCTV Reading Station
- Provision of a special needs card
- Assistive technologies embedded on the Library website
- Website that incorporates AODA standard for Information and Communication

Consultation

The content of the Richmond Hill Public Library's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed in consultation with RHPL staff and committees including the Senior Leadership Team.

Achievements

Current and previous versions of the website comply with WCAG and AODA Information and Communication Standard.

Support of the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) for customers with sight issues

The Library's Visiting Library Service (VLS) delivered 3600 items to 139 homebound customers in 2022.

Compliant website launched that complies with WCAG and AODA Information and Communication Standard (IASR)

Added BrowseAloud and then ReachDeck to the Library website for screen reading and translation.

Vendors are required to be AODA compliant

Replaced and upgraded accessible computers at the Central and Richmond Green branches. This includes touch screen monitors, SmartView Synergy PI, Freedom Scientific SARA and a Traxsys Joystick.

Accessible devices have motorized height adjustable desks.

Introduced chat service for reference questions and circulation services, including card renewal.

Mandatory AODA training required for all staff.

Established a vision loss book club, a friendship club for adults with developmental or cognitive disabilities, and a sensory storytime for children with diverse abilities.

Accessible height adjustable kiosks for signing out materials and paying fines at all branches

Staff were trained in creating and using accessible documents and documents are available in accessible formats.

Free admittance for support persons attending programs.

Co-op and work experience placements for persons with disabilities

Strategies & Actions

Conduct an accessibility audit of all locations.

Add accessible hardware and software for individuals with hearing impairments.

Add accessible hardware and software for neurodiverse individuals.

Investigate visual alarms and signals for hearing impaired individuals.

Assess impact of disabling and removing RFID gates to reduce barriers.

Start circulating Sensory Support Kits, potential to pair with relevant programs.

Start circulating Dementia / Cognitive Care Kits, potential to pair with relevant programs.

Add assistive devices to Library of Things collection including Victor Readers, C-Pens, and magnifying sheets.

Further develop our dyslexia friendly / decodable book collection, and improve the discoverability/cataloguing of those items.

Revamp our Accessibility webpage to better reflect our collection.

Conduct an accessibility audit of all locations.

Add accessible hardware and software for individuals with hearing impairments.

Add accessible hardware and software for neurodiverse individuals.

Investigate visual alarms and signals for hearing impaired individuals.

Disable and remove RFID gates.

Engage the community to identify barriers to access library facilities

Expand assistive technologies at Central and Richmond Green branches to the Oak Ridges and Richvale branches.

Improve wayfinding tools to improve navigation for all users inside and outside of all branches.

Create an emergency response for people with disabilities (accessible emergency procedures).

Continue employee training including refresher sessions.

Review washrooms to ensure that they meet accessibility requirements and address deficiencies.

Establish an accessibility committee with representation from all branches.

Determine if adult change tables can be added at all branches.

Feedback

Copies of this Accessibility Plan are available upon request. The Plan is also available in alternate formats upon request. Copies in alternate formats can be obtained by contacting the Library at 905-884-9288, or MYAP@rhpl.ca