



BRACEBRIDGE LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Number: OP-10

Title: Accessible and General
Customer Service

Approval Date: June 20, 2023

Category: Operational

Policy Replacing: Facilities #3, Customer Service
OP-10

Year of next review: 2026

PURPOSE:

The purpose of The Accessible Customer Service Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in Ontario Regulation 429/07 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This policy is prepared in accordance with the Regulation and addresses the following:

- The Provision of Goods and Services
- Communication
- Use of Assistive Devices
- Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals
- Use of Support Person
- Notice of Temporary Disruptions
- Training Requirements
- Feedback Process
- Notice of Availability of Documents/Format of Documents

In addition this policy recognizes that the Bracebridge Library strives to provide excellent customer service to all patrons at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Bracebridge Library provides library services, resources and facilities in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities and excellent customer service to all patrons. It provides a framework for compliance with the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and addresses specific areas required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation associated with the AODA. This Policy applies to all persons who provide library services including employees, volunteers and all other persons that provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Library.

DEFINITIONS:

Accessible formats – Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive devices – Assistive devices are any products, instruments, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities to help prevent, compensate, relieve or neutralize a disability. They may include braille recorders, recording devices, Bliss symbolics boards or devices, and more.

Barrier- A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Communication supports – Communication supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Disability – may include, but is not limited to:

- a. 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 impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. A mental disorder; or
- e. 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- Service animal refers to an animal used by a person for reason relating to their disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- a. The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b. The person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

1. The Provision of Goods & Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Bracebridge Library will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- a. The Library's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities,
- b. The provision of the Library's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have a disability unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Library's good and services,
- c. Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the library's goods and services,
- d. The Library shall have regard to the accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

2. Communication with Persons with or without Disabilities

When communicating with persons with disabilities, Library staff will do so in a manner that considers the person's current barriers. Staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. The Library is committed to providing fully accessible telephone services to our patrons where practically possible. If conventional telephone service is not suitable to the patron's needs, the Library will offer to communicate with the patron by email.

Staff will provide quality customer service including responsive, courteous and efficient service to all patrons.

In addition staff will work with community partners, other libraries, community organizations and the Town of Bracebridge in a professional and cooperative manner.

3. Use of Assistive Devices

- a. The Library is committed to serving individuals who require the use of assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from our goods and services. Staff will be familiarized with the various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities.
- b. Exceptions may occur wherein the person with a disability is hindered from using an assistive device or it may be deemed as a health and safety risk to others. In these situations, the library shall make every effort to accommodate the individual by offering reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using or benefiting from our goods and services.

4. The Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

- a. Persons with a disability may enter the Library accompanied by a guide dog or service animal and keep the guide dog or service animal with them. The Library will ensure that alternative means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Library's goods and services if an animal is excluded from the premises.
- b. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, Library staff may ask the person for confirmation of the animal's status and proper documentation as provided by a registered health care professional.

- c. Service animals are generally dogs but do include other animals. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their service animal is always kept under control.

5. The Use of a Support Person

- a. A person with a disability may enter the Library with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.
- b. The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while at the Library in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.
- c. A support person will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable when assisting a person with a disability to use, obtain or benefit from the Library's goods and services.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

When temporary interruptions occur to the Library's services or facility, the Library will provide notice as soon as possible by posting the information in visible places or on the Library's website or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

7. Training

The Library will ensure that every person (employee, agent, volunteer or third party) who deals with members of the public on behalf of the Library shall receive training to include the following:

- a. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- b. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- c. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or assistance of a support person.

- d. How to use equipment or devices available on Library property and provided by the Library that may help with the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.
- e. What to do if a person with disability is having difficulty accessing the Library's goods or services.
- f. The Library's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service provided.
- g. A record of the training provided, the date of the training and the recipients will be maintained. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

8. Feedback Process

Feedback from our patrons provides an opportunity to learn and improve our programs and services. The Library is committed to excellent customer service and the community will be engaged in regular evaluation to obtain feedback from the public to identify areas that may require change and service improvement.

To ensure that provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities is done so in an effective and timely manner, the patron is invited to provide their feedback as follows:

- a. By mail/in person at:
 - Attention: CEO / Chief Librarian
 - Bracebridge Library
 - 94 Manitoba Street
 - Bracebridge, Ontario
 - P1L 2B5
- a. By telephone at: 705-645-4171
- b. By email at: info@BracebridgeLibrary.ca
- c. By feedback form at: <https://BracebridgeLibrary.ca/about-us/contact-us/>
- d. In order to assist in a proper response, patrons will be asked to provide their name, address, telephone number and any other contact information necessary.

9. Notice of Availability of Documents/Format of Documents

The Library shall notify the public that the documents required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and the Library's Policies, procedures, notices of temporary disruptions; training records are available upon request, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

Notice of the availability of documents may be given by posting the information:

- a. In conspicuous places owned and/or operated by the Bracebridge Library
- b. On the Library website and/or any other reasonable method.

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Library will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

- a. The Library and the person with a disability will agree on what format will be used.
- b. The document or information will be provided to the person in an accessible format or with communication support in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged.

PREVIOUS REVISIONS: Facilities #3, OP:10: Customer Service (September 2022), OP-13: Accessible Customer Service (January 2023)

RELATED DOCUMENTS: Bracebridge Library Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).