

# NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY:

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 - 2025



### Introduction

The Niagara Falls Public Library (NFPL) strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The NFPL is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

### Section 1. Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The Niagara Falls Public Library has completed the following accessibility initiatives:

#### Customer Service

The NFPL is committed to providing and upholding accessible and inclusive customer service practices. One of its primary focuses is to offer equitable access to our goods, services, programs, and facilities that uphold the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity, while always meeting the individual accessibility needs of our customers with disabilities.

Since 2010, the NFPL 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 received training on the Customer Service standard and the Human Rights Code
- Visiting Library Service program implemented in 2015 to serve customers unable to visit the Library due to mobility issues
- Accessible computer stations implemented including adjustable height access to online catalogue
- Low vision magnifier
- Large print collection
- Accessible, automatic sliding glass doors in the main lobby at main branch. Wheelchair accessible entrances at all locations
- Children's programming moved into flat, accessible floor space
- Library website and local history data base updated to meet WCAG 2.0 compliance standards

- Curbside pickup established during Covid and has been maintained
- Screen reading software, Text to Speech software and screen magnification software. Portable digital readers such as a Victor Reader Stream or a mobile phone can also be used to read eBooks. Electronic devices can be turned into assistive reading tools by changing the font style, style and colour
- All public programming made available on main floor
- Removal of overdue fines for customers (2021)

## **Information and Communications**

The NFPL is committed to providing information and communications to its employees and customers with disabilities in a manner that takes into account 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 events, and an accessible website, web content, and web-based applications.

Initiatives include:

- Automatic Release Plan (ARP) to ensure that our large print collection contains current, popular titles that meet the needs of our ageing community. We plan to dedicate even more funds to this collection in the near future
- We have materials available in a wide variety of formats, including print, spoken word audio, described video and electronic
- Electronic titles (eBooks, eAudiobooks, electronic magazines, Playaways, etc.)
- Improved collection signage to make the signs more visible and clear.
- Fonts more readable on all spine labels (larger, clearer, darker font)
- Library website and local history data base updated to meet WCAG 2.0 compliance standards
- Adoption of position statements on: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Serving Marginalized Individuals; and Access to Communication and Information Technology

## **Employment**

The NFPL is committed to fostering a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and accessible work environment for its employees with disabilities. 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 account when participating in its performance management and return-to-work programs.

Initiatives include:

- Hiring policy which includes a statement informing successful candidates that workplace accessibility accommodations are available upon request (2015)
- Statement informing job applicants that workplace accessibility accommodations are available upon request including in all job postings
- Removing requirement of a driver's license and vehicle from all job postings where not a bona fide requirement of a specific job
- Ergonomic procedure implemented (2021)
- Modified work procedures updated (2020)

- Work From Home policy implemented (2020)

### **Self-service kiosks**

The NFPL strives to meet the needs of its customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Initiatives include:

- Self-service kiosk implemented in 2 of 4 branches (2018)
- Novel Branch (book vending machine, 2016)

### **Training**

The NFPL 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 received training on the Customer Service standard and the Human Rights Code
- Members of the WebTeam attended the webinars hosted by Accessibility Ontario, including *"Accessible Video Captioning"*, *"Introduction to website accessibility"* and *"New in website accessibility - WCAG 2.1"*
- Communications Associate attended *"Accessibility Services Canada"* webinar (2022)
- Dyslexia-friendly training for all staff
- Code of conduct policy updated to include pictures of mobility devices and shared with staff (2023)
- Trauma-Informed Care training for HR

### **Design of Public Spaces**

The NFPL is committed to upholding its strategic priority of providing open, accessible, and inclusive spaces for its employees and customers by incorporating the barrier-free requirements under the Ontario Building Code and the technical requirements under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards.

Initiatives include:

- Shelving made more accessible by raising the lowest shelves and lowering the highest shelves on all of our shelving units so that our materials are easier to access (2018)
- Book and material displays are accessible to all
- Accessible, automatic sliding glass doors in the main lobby at main branch. Wheelchair accessible entrances at all locations
- Accessible computer stations implemented including adjustable height access to online catalogue (2011)
- Children’s programming moved into flat, accessible floor space
- Push buttons installed for accessible washrooms (2015)
- Circulation desks made accessible (2016)
- Upgraded security gates to accommodate wheelchairs (2020)

## Section 2. Strategies and Actions

The NFPL has identified the following it plans to continue or accomplish in order to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

### Customer Service

The Niagara Falls Public Library is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Initiatives:

- Continued expansion of our large print collection (ongoing)
- New staff training and refresher training for current staff on the full suite of IASR modules (ongoing)
- Expansion of Visiting Library Service program implemented in 2015 to serve customers unable to visit the Library due to mobility issues
- Continual update of Library website to meet WCAG compliance standards
- Continuing curbside pickup

### Information and Communications

The Niagara Falls Public Library is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Initiatives include:

- Dedicating more funds to our large print collection to ensure current, popular titles that meet the needs of our ageing community
- Dedicate more funds to electronic titles to allow users with visual, physical or print disabilities to have access to standard reading materials that they might not otherwise be able to access.
- Continued improvements to the layout and content of our website to ensure that it's easier for users with visual, physical or print disabilities to navigate, and in compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- Updating the accessibility policy and accessibility plan (ongoing)
- Review and update of accessibility signage

### Employment

The NFPL is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Initiatives include:

- Updating of the Library's hiring policy (2024)
- Including a statement informing successful candidates that workplace accessibility accommodations are available upon request in all of its communications (2024)
- Provide information on the Library's workplace accommodation policies and processes in its orientations for new hires (2023)

- Provide information to Managers and Supervisors on the process for developing individualized workplace emergency response plans for their employees with disabilities (2024)
- Review workplace accommodation process (2024)
- Implement accessibility policy for existing employees (2024)
- Review and update of all accessibility-related policies (2025)

## **Procurement**

The NFPL is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Initiatives include:

- Incorporate accessibility criteria into all procurement proposals and contracts related to the acquisition of goods, services, products, and facilities (2025)
- Establish procurement processes and practices that advance accessibility and inclusion (2025)

## **Self-service kiosks**

The NFPL is committed to incorporating accessibility features/ considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Initiatives include:

- Implementing self-service kiosks in the remaining branches (2025)
- Update existing self-service kiosks (ongoing)

## **Training**

The NFPL 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:

- New staff training and refresher training for current staff on the full suite of IASR modules (ongoing)
- Training for IT team to ensure compliance with WCAG standards
- Implementation of Trauma-Informed Care principles for all staff (2024)
- Development of an accommodation quick-guide for frontline staff pertaining to accessibility standards and procedures (2024)

## **Design of Public Spaces**

The NFPL will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

Initiatives include:

- Chippawa branch relocating to a multi-use, fully-accessible facility in partnership with the City of Niagara Falls (TBD)
- Stamford branch renovation project undertaken to make a fully-accessible, barrier-free environment (2024)
- Children’s washroom at main Victoria branch to be made fully-accessible (2023)

The NFPL will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Initiatives include:

- Update the Library's service disruption procedures to reflect the applicable requirements under the Accessible Customer Service Standards (2023)
- Incorporate accessibility best practices into any future communication plans related to service disruptions and long-term branch closures (2023)

## For More Information

**For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:**

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**Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at:**

<https://www.nflibrary.ca/accessibility>

**Standard and accessible formats of this document are free on request from:**

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