2023-2025 Accessibility Plan for Kitchener Public Library

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;
- create and make mandatory and enforceable accessibility standards to be achieved within five years or less

Description of Kitchener Public Library

Kitchener Public Library is a public sector organization, providing excellent public library service. The library's Mission is that "we welcome our community to engaging spaces where people connect, ideas flourish, and lives are transformed".

The library has five locations: four community libraries and Central Library. The library serves a diverse community and is committed to providing equitable access to all our services and collections.

Kitchener Public Library Accessibility Plan Committee

Members

The Kitchener Public Library Accessibility Plan Committee members are the Division Manager, Resources and Membership Services; Manager, Library Systems & Analytics; Manager, Volunteer Services; Division Manager, Forest Heights Community Library; Manager, Facilities; Director, Business Services & Infrastructure; and the Director, Human Resources.

Accomplishments 2020-2022

Physical

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Self-Checkout display	Assess Bibliotheca software for font adjustments on display for new self-checkout.	IT Team	Completed 2020
Grand River Stanley Park book drop	Install accessible book drop at Grand River Stanley Park Community Library.	Angela Riddell Kevin Webb, Penny-Lynn Fielding, Robyn Zondervan	Completed 2021
Central Library – RHF Accessibility Rating & Certification	Plan Central Library on-site review with the Rick Hansen Foundation for a site rating and accessibility certification.	Angela Riddell, Megan Clare	Completed 2021
Readers for direct to player services	Investigate purchase of readers for direct to player services at community libraries.	Megan Clare	Completed 2021
C-Pen Readers	Add C-Pen Readers to the collection so that they are available to community members with low vision or reading difficulties such as dyslexia.	Bib Services & Circulation Teams	Completed 2021
Meeting Room Improvements	Meeting room equipment reviewed and improved to	Angela Riddell, Lisa Wallace	Completed 2021

February 2023

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
	maximize accessibility for staff and customer use at Central.		
Meeting Room Improvements	Meeting room equipment reviewed and improved to maximize accessibility for staff and customer use.	Angela Riddell, Lisa Wallace	Completed 2021
Country Hills book drop	Install accessible book drop at Country Hills Community Library.	Angela Riddell Kevin Webb, Penny-Lynn Fielding, Amanda Wiley	Completed 2022

Technology

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Website accessibility	Add accessible features in compliance with WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards such as video captions, audio transcripts, more complete text content and labels for fields in web forms, and accessible documents.	Gary Bauman	Ongoing; Audit Completed 2020; new site launched 2022
Access Centres	Review Access Centre and accessible technology at all locations to maximize usability. Software licenses renewed and hardware replaced.	Lisa Wallace and IT Team	Completed 2020
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Update current inventory of accessible hardware, software and equipment.	Lisa Wallace, Angela Riddell	Completed 2020

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Digital Collections	Stories in Sign Language ASL children's collection added to Download Library.	Michael Cruickshank and Inclusion Team	Completed 2020
Public computer workstations	Review configuration of public workstations at Central to maximize accessibility, including physical space and sensory considerations as part of the library's reopening plans.	Lisa Wallace, Penny-Lynn Fielding, Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Kevin Webb	Completed 2021
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate new alternatives for people with hearing-related disabilities to attend and participate in library services.	Angela Riddell, Lisa Wallace	Completed 2022

Policy

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Collections	Implement fine-free library service, with no overdue fines for all library customers.	Administration, Megan Clare, Gary Bauman, Circ Team	Completed 2021

Attitudinal

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessibility Training	Develop training content for staff on accessible software and hardware at the Access Centre workstations.	Kim Cluthe, IS Team, Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Megan Clare	Completed 2021; Ongoing

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Dementia Friendly customer service	Investigate opportunities for refresher/new staff dementia friendly customer service training	HR Team	Completed 2021
Accessibility Training	Conduct staff training at community libraries on accessible software and hardware.	Trevor Schoch	Completed 2022

Programs

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Sensory Storytime Program	Implement sensory storytime program at Central Library. Program implemented in 2020 and ongoing in 2021.	Lindsey Skeen and Children's Team	Completed 2020; Ongoing

New Initiatives

Physical

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Readers for direct to player services	Develop a plan, with staff training, and introduce new direct-to-player Victor Readers at community libraries.	Trevor Schoch	2023
Pioneer Park Washroom	Audit accessibility features and enhancements for Pioneer Park washroom (e.g. automatic door opener, emergency lighting)	Angela Riddell, Kevin Webb	2023
Dementia Friendly Book Collection	Conduct a review of the Dementia-friendly book collection	Jamie Quinn	2023

February 2023

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Forest Heights and Pioneer Park – accessibility audit	Review accessibility audits of Forest Heights and Pioneer Park for potential accessibility enhancements when received from City of Kitchener	Accessibility Committee	Ongoing
Southwest Community Library	Initial building design presented to the GRAC committee for feedback. Accessibility standards and considerations to be ongoing as building design is finalized.	Design Team and Architects	Ongoing

Technology

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
CELA Outreach & Marketing	Provide information on CELA and library services to community upon request. Develop a marketing program to raise awareness of the CELA program.	Trevor Schoch, Megan Clare, Circulation Services & Information Services Teams	Ongoing
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Conduct staff training and implement new equipment to support more inclusive library services for Deaf and hard of hearing community members at Central Library.	Angela Riddell, Lisa Lawrence, Megan Clare	2023
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate opportunities for audio or screen reading functionality on library self-checkout kiosks.	Gary Bauman, Lisa Wallace	2023
Website Accessibility	Ensure that accessibility considerations are central to ongoing content development on the new library website, and to staff training on website content procedures.	Kerri Hutchinson & Marketing Team	2023

February 2023

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Assistive technology for inclusive service delivery	Investigate Magnusmode to support improved independent access to library services for autistic and neurodivergent community members.	Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Megan Clare	2023
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate the implementation of equipment to support more inclusive services for Deaf and hard of hearing community members at community library locations.	Chris Schnarr, Accessibility Committee	2024

Policy

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Service Delivery	Implement a community-based advisory group to identify accessibility barriers to library service.	Accessibility Committee	2023
Accessible Service Delivery	Conduct a review of Visiting Library Service for at-home community members	Sherry Erb & Project Team	2023
Accessible Collections	Continue to identify collection formats and other resources that support accessibility	Collection Management Team	Ongoing
Accessible Collections	Consider accessibility in the implementation of new collections	Collection Management Team	Ongoing

Attitudinal

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Dementia Friendly customer service	Investigate opportunities for refresher/new staff dementia friendly customer service training	HR Team	2024
Accessibility Awareness	Provide information and updates about accessibility in staff and volunteer newsletters and by email	HR staff, Volunteer Services staff	Ongoing
Accessibility Training	Continue to provide training to staff related to appropriate service processes that supports accessibility for all	HR Staff & Others as required	Ongoing

Programs

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Film screenings at Central	Introduce closed captioning for film screenings at Central Library	Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Lindsey Skeen, Matt MacKinnon	2023

Communication Plan

- Communicate Plan to Management Team – February 2023
- Communicate Plan to staff – March 2023
- Communicate Plan to the public on KPL website – March 2023
- Provide paper copies of the Plan upon request – Ongoing

February 2023

Conclusion

This Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Kitchener Public Library is committed to providing equitable access and removing barriers to all services and facilities.