

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 role is to advance an enriched, caring, and inclusive future for our city. To do that we develop lifelong opportunities for growth that improve wellbeing.

The library has six locations: five 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; Division Manager, Country Hills Community Library; Manager, Facilities; Director, Business Services & Infrastructure; and the Director, Human Resources.

Accomplishments 2023-2024

Physical

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Central Library	Implement a continuous hand railing at Central Library interior staircase, for improved accessibility	Angela Riddell, Kevin Webb	Completed 2024
Southwest Community Library	Apply for Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification for the Southwest Community Library	Angela Riddell, Amanda Wiley	Completed 2024
Readers for direct to player services	Develop a plan, with staff training, and introduce new direct-to-player Victor Stratus and Stream Readers	Trevor Schoch	Completed 2023
Pioneer Park Washroom	Audit accessibility features and enhancements for Pioneer Park washroom (e.g. automatic door opener, emergency lighting)	Angela Riddell, Kevin Webb	Completed 2023
Dementia Friendly Book Collection	Conduct a review of the Dementia-friendly book collection	Jamie Quinn	Completed 2023
Height Adjustable Catalogue Stands	Procure height adjustable catalogue stands for Central Library	Megan Clare, Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Lindsey Skeen	Completed 2023

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Southwest Community Library	Initial building design was presented to the GRAAC committee in 2021 for feedback. Accessibility standards and considerations were ongoing as building design was finalized	Design Team and Architects	Completed 2023

Technology

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Conduct staff training and implement new assistive listening equipment to support more inclusive library experiences for Deaf and hard of hearing program and event participants at Central Library	Angela Riddell, Lisa Wallace, Megan Clare, Kristin Johnson, Trevor Schoch, Kim Cluthe, Jonathan Moore	Completed 2024
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Implement new hearing loop system at Central Welcome Desk and Information Desk	Trevor Schoch, Megan Clare	Completed 2023
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate opportunities for audio or screen reading functionality on library self-checkout kiosks	Gary Bauman, Lisa Wallace	Completed 2023
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	Completed 2023
Website Accessibility	Ensure that accessibility considerations are central to ongoing content development on the library website, and to	Kerri Hutchinson & Marketing Team	Completed 2023

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
	staff training on website content procedures		

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	Sherry, Erb, Accessibility Committee	Completed 2023

Attitudinal

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Customer Service Excellence	Assess opportunities for refresher/new staff dementia friendly customer service training	Lisa Lawrence, Mo Olupona	Completed 2024
Accessibility Awareness	Develop an Accessible Resources brochure to raise awareness about accessible library services	Trevor Schoch, Marketing Team	Completed 2023

Programs

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Programs	Introduce new accessibility equipment and sensory based play items for use in children's programs and spaces at all locations	Chanelle Seguin, Kira Burt, Lindsey Skeen	Completed 2024
Film screenings at Central	Introduce closed captioning for film screenings at Central Library	Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Lindsey Skeen, Matt MacKinnon	Completed 2023

New Initiatives

Physical

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Central Library	Investigate repairs to the Central Library book drop ramp	Kevin Webb, Angela Riddell	2025
Lending Memory Kit Collection	Introduce a new lending memory kit collection for community members with dementia	David Mason, Robyn Zondervan, Jamie Quinn	2025

Technology

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate Userway accessibility widget to enhance the user experience on the library website	Gary Bauman, Kerri Hutchinson,	2025

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
		Megan Clare, Trevor Schoch	
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate Blindsquare to support accessible navigation in library spaces for blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted community members	Megan Clare, Trevor Schoch	2025
Accessible Service Delivery	Investigate a wayfinding approach on the library website to support user awareness and comfort with key service interactions	Gary Bauman, Kerri Hutchinson, David Mason, Robyn Zondervan	2025
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Investigate opportunities to enhance accessibility in Heffner Studio	Sukh Binning, Sam Tsai, Trevor Schoch, Matt MacKinnon	2025
Accessible Hardware, software and devices	Implement assistive listening equipment to support more inclusive library services for Deaf and hard of hearing community members at community library locations	Chris Schnarr, Trevor Schoch	2025
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

Policy

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Service Delivery	Review and update the library's Accessibility Policy	Accessibility Committee	2025

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessible Service Delivery	Develop and implement an outreach plan for Visiting Library long-term care sites	Trevor Schoch, Patti Schumacher	2025
Accessible Collections	Identify collection formats and other resources that support accessibility, and prioritize accessibility considerations in the implementation of new collections	Collection Management Team	Ongoing

Attitudinal

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date
Accessibility Awareness	Host a gallery exhibit at Central Library featuring work on themes of accessibility and disability	Accessibility Advisory Group, Megan Clare, Trevor Schoch	2025
Accessibility Awareness	Plan recognition Initiatives for National AccessAbility Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Trevor Schoch	2025
Customer Service Excellence	Investigate opportunities for staff training to enhance engagement and customer service with adults with disabilities	Lisa Lawrence, David Mason, Robyn Zondervan	2025
Accessibility Awareness	Provide information and updates about accessibility in staff and volunteer newsletters and by email	HR Team, Volunteer Services staff	Ongoing

Accessibility Training	Continue to provide training to staff related to appropriate service processes that supports accessibility for all	HR Team & Others as required	Ongoing
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Programs

Accessibility Initiative	Action	Responsibility (committee, staff, or department)	Date

Communication Plan

- Communicate Plan to Management Team - February 2025
- Communicate Plan to staff - March 2025
- Community Plan to the Accessibility Advisory Group - March 2025
- Communicate Plan to the public on KPL website - March 2025
- Provide paper copies of the Plan upon request - Ongoing

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.