

Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities represent four years of dedicated work by librarians, people with disabilities, and agencies serving people with disabilities from across Canada. In 1993, a National Forum to discuss the need for developing library guidelines for serving persons with disabilities was held at the Canadian Library Association Conference. During this session, it became evident that libraries needed guidelines by which to measure services they were currently providing. As well, guidelines explaining how to establish new services were required.

As a result of the National Forum, a Task Force was formed. This Task Force was comprised of representatives from each province (for a list of members, see Appendix I). Janice Hayes, CNIB Library for the Blind and Convenor of the Canadian Library Association's Interest Group on Library Services to Persons with Disabilities, was the chair of the Task Force. Task Force members contacted librarians in each Province who expressed an interest in working on the project. Provincial teams comprised of librarians from all types of libraries, interest groups, people with disabilities, and agencies serving people with disabilities were established.

The Task Force identified eleven areas as essential for inclusion in the guidelines. Suggested items for inclusion were gathered from the Provincial teams. In June 1994, the teams responded to the guidelines. Based on this response, draft guidelines were prepared by the Task Force. In 1996, these draft guidelines were distributed for comment to Provincial team leaders and to members of the CLA Interest Group on Library Services to Persons with Disabilities. The draft document was edited to reflect the comments and concerns of the Provincial teams and interest group members.

Extensive consultation and cooperation from across the country resulted in the following library guidelines on serving people with disabilities. These guidelines are intended to be used by librarians as the basis for creating libraries which are accessible to all Canadians.

THE LIBRARY MANDATE

1. The library Mission Statement must reflect the mandate that all citizens have a right to equitable library and information services.
2. Library goals shall ensure that staff treat persons with disabilities with the consideration, dignity and respect to which all patrons are entitled.
3. Library goals must state that all facilities and services shall be accessible to everyone. Where physical or other barriers exist, planning strategies must identify the steps required to remove them.
4. To help achieve its mandate, the library must cooperate with local and provincial groups representing and serving people with disabilities.
5. As changes occur in society, funding availability, and technologies, the library must carry out continuous evaluations of its programs, services, and collections,

to ensure their effectiveness and relevance to the needs of all persons in the community.

6. Libraries must not only be free of physical barriers, they must provide a welcoming environment: attractive listening and special-equipment areas, staff trained to be sensitive to patrons' needs, and access to the library's full range of services.

LEGISLATION

Federal, provincial and municipal legislation has clearly stated legislation affecting the provision of services for people with disabilities. Library management and staff must be familiar with human-rights legislation, building codes, and other regulations relating to disability issues, for the jurisdiction where they apply: Canada, the provinces, regions and municipalities.

Listed below are methods of enhancing the existing legislation.

1. Provincial and municipal guidelines should be used to determine the most appropriate methods to guarantee public library service to people with disabilities.
2. The library's staff and board members should be provided with copies of applicable municipal and provincial regulations for accessible public buildings and libraries.
3. Government publications should be acquired in all available formats to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

TERMINOLOGY

Terminology affects the perception of, behaviour towards, dialogue with and image of people with disabilities.

1. The library must ensure that non-discriminatory terminology regarding persons with disabilities is used in all of its publications and services: for promotional and marketing materials; bibliographies and other publications; training and orientation of staff and users; public assemblies; and one-to-one interviews.

2. The library should display and make available multiple English and/or French copies of the free federal government pamphlet *A Way With Words/Le Pouvoir des mots* for staff and users.
3. As the terminology on disabilities changes constantly, the library should also consult members and representatives of community disability groups on the terminology that should be used.
4. As changes in terminology occur, the library would be well advised to create its own lexicon and have copies available to staff and users.
5. Terminology should be used in a consistent fashion. International symbols of disability should be used on library signs.
6. Plain, everyday language should be used in publications produced by the library.

PLANNING

1. Planning services for people with disabilities should be integrated into the library planning process, and prioritized for planning and implementation.
2. Library planning must include input from members and representatives of community disability groups. Advisory committees and library boards should include persons with disabilities to ensure that the needs of these individuals are integrated into the planning process.
3. The library should solicit input from the community disability groups by organizing focus groups, to identify needs and establish priorities.
4. The demographics of the Canadian population point to an increase in the number of potential users with mobility, vision and hearing problems. Planning must take into account this growing demand for accessible facilities and services.
5. The library should take advantage of resources already available in the community. Planning must take into account collections of videos, talking book and Braille books, reproduction services, adaptive technologies, and other assets available at other libraries and services providers, to avoid unnecessary expense, and to benefit from their expertise, shared experience and cooperation.
6. The library should conduct periodic evaluations of its activities and services to ensure that they are being delivered effectively to all members of the community. Evaluation methods could include: user and circulation figures and other statistics; surveys; program evaluations; users' suggestions, complaints, and other forms of feedback.

7. Libraries unable to conduct their own research into the needs and identities of persons with disabilities, in particular those not currently being served, should draw on data and information compiled by other agencies, organizations and service providers.
8. Efforts should be made to promote library sources to persons with disabilities through local organizations and agencies, consumer groups, hospitals and clinics, using standard and alternative formats.

BUDGETING

1. Services and collections for persons with disabilities shall be treated, during the budgeting process, as essential core services.
2. The library shall determine what percentage of its budget is needed to (a) improve accessibility and to (b) provide services for persons with disabilities.
3. Steps to make a library's physical facilities and services accessible, and to acquire adaptive technologies, should be identified so that improvements can be made in a carefully planned, phased program.
4. Funding for new equipment and enhanced services should be sought from corporate and private donors and service clubs.
5. Materials in alternate format (large print, Braille, videos, and tapes) should be acquired at the same time as purchase of hard-copy print publications.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

1. Needs assessment, planning and budgeting should establish the priorities which need to be promoted to the consumers.
2. Internal marketing, with staff and administrators, is an integral part of promoting and improving services to people with disabilities.
3. A marketing plan should:
 - define objectives
 - determine target group(s)
 - develop marketing strategies to meet needs of the target group(s)
 - determine the channels of communication that will most effectively deliver a message to each target group

be measured against defined objectives.

Efforts must be made to seek input from individuals as well as organizations in the targeting, keeping in mind the many and varied needs of people with disabilities.

4. Services can be promoted in alternate formats, depending on the target audience, through local organizations, clinics, medical groups, hospitals, student disability services, consumer groups, social service organizations, word of mouth and personal contact.
5. Bibliographies on specific disabilities could be prepared and distributed in the libraries to coincide with special activities such as White Cane Week, Diabetes Month, etc.
6. Promotion of services for people with disabilities must be mainstreamed.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING

1. An ongoing training program must be in place for library administrators, existing staff, new employees, volunteers, and library board members to heighten awareness and sensitivity, provide information on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, and help develop positive and appropriate attitudes.
2. Persons with disabilities and representatives of disability groups should be participants in staff training sessions.
3. Training policies and procedures must include guidelines regarding confidentiality, equitable service and equal access for people with disabilities.
4. The training program must include guidelines for appropriate behaviour, and these should be enforced by supervisors, management and staff appraisals.
5. Larger libraries should have someone proficient in American Sign Language on call, and/or have selected staff trained in ASL. Similarly, there should be a staff member or volunteer who can use Braille. Smaller libraries may share "floating" staff members or volunteers.
6. The library should compile a list of persons and organizations with particular expertise regarding various forms of disability.
7. The library must make every attempt to hire both paid employees and volunteers with disabilities.

8. Opportunities to have library staff meet and become involved with community disability groups should be pursued.
9. One member of staff should be designated resource person responsible for the library's disability program: to provide information for both staff and the public; to coordinate activities and services; to keep informed of developments and trends; to act as liaison with community disability groups; and to serve as internal coordinator within the library.

(However, all staff should be able to respond to questions that do not require expertise in disability issues, eg., brief informational requests should not be referred automatically to the coordinator for special services.)

PUBLIC SERVICES

1. The library's service for persons with disabilities should be mainstreamed into its regular public services. Persons with disabilities have the same information needs as everyone else.
2. Standard library services available to all readers must be made available to persons with disabilities. These include: reader advisory services, reference, user education and orientation, community information services, and interlibrary loans.
 - To make this possible, the library will give priority to acquiring adaptive technologies and products such as TTY (Teletypewriters), print-enhancing equipment, personal readers, specially adapted microcomputers, reachers for inaccessible shelved materials, magnifying lenses, and reference materials in alternative formats.
3. Staff must be trained and available to help users with disabilities use equipment and access materials and collections.
4. The library should create and adapt programs that will include persons with disabilities, eg., signed children's programs, talking-book discussion groups.
5. The library must evaluate its outreach programs to ensure that all potential users are made aware of the services available to them.
 - Technology that makes library resources accessible to those unable to come to the library in person include remote-access catalogues; reference and information requested and answered via e-mail, TTY and regular telephones, and telefacsimile. These should be publicized, together with other regular and

special services-document delivery; lectures, workshops, discussion accessible to persons with visual, hearing, and motor disabilities; open- or closed-access video; volunteer readers; and special-format materials for education and research, practical information and recreation.

6. The library should consider all media to promote its accessible services: bookmarks and other printed handouts - in traditional and alternative formats - distributed to schools, banks, bookshops; community billboards (printed or on local computer networks); public service announcements on radio, television, and in local newspapers.
7. The library should participate in networks of local, provincial, regional, national and international libraries and institutions to ensure availability of alternate format materials through interlibrary loan, and cooperative programs.
8. In-house information files on disabling conditions and agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities should be created and maintained.
9. Staff must be aware of the availability, copyright restrictions, and lending policies for materials in alternative formats.
10. Interlibrary loan policies on fees, copyright, access, and eligibility need to be reviewed and a consensus reached among alternate format service providers.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

1. Library collections policies must reflect the needs and priorities of persons with disabilities.
2. Libraries should establish a collection development policy for materials for people with disabilities using input from consumers and specialists in the field.
3. Tools used in the acquisitions process must include directories of alternative formats such as videos, large print, tapes, talking books, Braille, etc.
4. Collections in alternative formats must appeal to a variety of interests and needs (recreation, education, employment, and lifelong learning).
5. Videos with closed or open captions should be available for those with hearing disabilities.
6. Videos with descriptive voice for individuals should be available for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

RESOURCE SHARING

1. Acquisitions policies should include resource-sharing provisions.
2. Whenever possible, libraries should use service providers eg., CNIB, for materials in alternative formats.
3. Libraries with alternative format holdings should report items that can be loaned to CANUC:H. CANUC:H provides library locations for alternative format materials on the AMICUS database. Library locations provided do not include information on the availability of materials. However, the annual publication, Symbols and Interlibrary Loan Policies in Canada, gives lending information and policies provided by the libraries themselves.
4. Libraries who produce alternate format materials should maintain a collection of masters for resource sharing.
5. Resource-sharing policies between provinces and other jurisdictions should be flexible.
6. The library should promote sharing of resources such as use of adaptive technologies and materials in alternative formats by cooperating in the production of a union list of collections, equipment and expertise.

ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

1. Major purchases should be planned on the basis of a needs assessment, consultation with focus groups, and research into (a) costs of maintaining, servicing, and using the equipment; (b) availability of identical equipment in local disability centres or other libraries; (c) evaluations or other information on performance, cost, and reliability of the product.
2. At least one accessible terminal adapted to the needs of patrons with visual, hearing and motor impairments should be available in the library.
3. As many staff members as possible should be familiar with the various adaptive technologies, so that patrons and employees can be assisted in using the device when the official troubleshooter is not available.
4. User manuals and instructions should be available for both staff and patrons.
5. Manuals and instruction sheets must be accessible in formats such as tape, large print, disk, Braille, etc.
6. Service contracts with vendors should include training and troubleshooting.
7. Technologies should include both high and low technical devices.

PHYSICAL ACCESS

1. Building codes are a provincial, regional or municipal responsibility. Therefore, the appropriate Federal, Provincial and Municipal building codes and by-laws should be consulted to ensure that libraries and their various components are accessible to people with disabilities (see Appendix II).
2. The Canadian national code for accessibility is issued by the Canadian Standards Association. However, the Standard "does not have the force of law unless mandated by legislation or called up in the regulations of the authority having jurisdiction. The user is advised to contact the local authority having jurisdiction in this area in order to determine to what extent this Standard is referenced". (Barrier-Free Design: A National Standard of Canada, CAN/CSA-B651-94, 2nd ed., Rexdale, Ont.: Canadian Standards Association, 1995.)
3. Barrier-Free Design: A National Standard of Canada and The Accessible Canadian Library II both contain guidelines which ensure adequate access into the library and use of the facilities and services provided by a particular library.
4. Disability as defined in the national code includes persons "with physical or sensory disabilities: mobility impairments such as reliance on crutches or a wheelchair; reaching and manipulation disabilities; hearing impairments; deafness; visual impairment and blindness." (Barrier-Free Design: A National Standard of Canada, CAN/CSA-B651-94, 2nd ed., Rexdale, Ont.: Canadian Standards Association, 1995.)
5. It is essential to consult with library users who have various types of disabilities and with community disability organizations prior to building a new facility or retrofitting an existing library. User committees comprised of these groups should be formed in order to identify the accessibility needs.
6. Accessibility includes such areas as access into the library building; accessible reference and circulation desks; glare-free, tactile, colour-contrasted signage; clear, easy-to-read labels, instructions, and signs for services and collections; sufficient lighting; audible and visual emergency alarm systems; collections which include alternate format materials; and access to the library's catalogue.
7. When possible, facilities should be located on main public transportation routes and adequate, accessible parking should be provided.

CURRICULM

1. Courses offered at library schools, library technicians and teacher-librarian programs should incorporate all aspects of library services to persons with disabilities.

2. The promotion of scholarships or bursaries should be encouraged in order to attract more people with disabilities into the library career field.

APPENDIX I

Representatives from each Province included:

Diane Bays
National Library of Canada

Elsa Cane
CSLA, Teacher-Librarian, Sir John Franklin School

Arlene Chan
Toronto Public Library

Andrea John
Nova Scotia Provincial Library

Rosemary Kavanagh
CNIB Library for the Blind

Judith Lytle
Barrier-Free Design Centre/Access Place Canada

Maureen Perez
Metro Toronto Reference Library

Eva Nichols
The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Elizabeth Ridler
Consultant

Miriam Ticoll
The Roeher Institute

APPENDIX II

Provincial/Territorial Building Code Authorities:

ALBERTA

Alberta Labour
Building and Fire Safety Branch
#705, 10808 - 99th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5
Tel.: (403) 427.8265
Fax: (403) 422.7205

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Building Standards Branch
800 Johnson Street
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Tel.: (250) 387.4010
Fax: (250) 356.9019

MANITOBA

Manitoba Department of the Fire Commissioner
#508, 401 York Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2C 0P8
Tel.: (204) 945.3331
Fax: (204) 948.2089

NEW BRUNSWICK

Municipalities, Culture, and Housing Program Support Services
Engineering Division
20 McGloin Street
Fredericton, NB E3B 5C3
Tel.: (506) 453.2845
Fax: (506) 457.4991

NEWFOUNDLAND

Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Government Service Centre
5 Mews Place
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
Tel.: (709) 729.3144
Fax: (709) 729.2071

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Fire Safety - Public Safety Division
Department of Safety and Public Services
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9
Tel.: (403) 873.7944
Fax: (403) 873.0260

NOVA SCOTIA

Department of Municipal Affairs
1601 Lower Water Street, 4th Floor
Halifax, NS B3J 2M4
Tel.: (902) 424.8046
Fax: (902) 424.0821

ONTARIO

Ministry of Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5
Tel.: (416) 585.7025
Fax: (416) 585.6227

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Department of Provincial Affairs and Attorney General
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7N8
Tel.: (902) 368.4874
Fax: (902) 368.5526

QUEBEC

Ministère des Affaires municipales
Edifice Cook-Chauveau

Québec, QC G1R 4J3
Tel.: (418) 691.2019
Fax: (418) 643.7385

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Municipal Government
Building Standards
3310 - 1855 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 3V5
Tel.: (306) 787.4113
Fax: (306) 787.9273

YUKON

Community and Transportation Services
Public Safety Branch, M3A
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
Tel.: (403) 667.5094
Fax: (403) 393.6249

Barrier-free Design:

BARRIER-FREE DESIGN CONSULTANTS

31 Biggar Avenue
Toronto, ON M6H 2N5
Tel.: (416) 656.2332
Fax: (416) 656.2642

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR BARRIER-FREE DESIGN

Faculty of Architecture
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Tel.: (204) 474.8588 or 474.6450
Fax: (204) 275.7198

CANADIAN HOUSING INFORMATION CENTRE

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
700 Montreal Road

Ottawa, ON K1A 0P7
Tel.: (613) 748.2367
Fax: (613) 748.4069

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN CONSTRUCTION

The National Research Council of Canada
Building M-20, Montreal Road
Ottawa, ON K1A 0R6

SOCIETE D'HABITATION DU QUEBEC

Succursale Montréal Centre de documentation
3 Place Desjardins
Tour du Nord, 25 Etage
Montréal, QU H5B 1B3
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Fax: (514) 873.2849

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