

**Approval: Updated Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information
Services for People with Disabilities**

Signatures and font size have been edited in the email thread in order to reduce the amount of space used and the size of the document shared with Executive Council.

From: Valoree McKay [<mailto:vmckay@cla.ca>]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2016 11:15 AM
To: Johnson, Teresa Ann (NBPLS/SBPNB)
Subject: RE: Revised Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

Hi Teresa

To be honest I am fairly confident that CLA will not be funding a translation to an alternate format at this time. Strictly due to finances. I will share this information with Executive Council and if they wish to seek a quote after approval of the guideline then we have a source and if they cannot then we can share the source with the Federation (we are hoping that they agree to adopt the CLA position statements as their own)

Thank you,

Val

Valoree McKay, CAE
Executive Director

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From: Johnson, Teresa Ann (NBPLS/SBPNB) [<mailto:teresa.johnson@gnb.ca>]
Sent: February-19-16 8:16 AM
To: Valoree McKay
Subject: RE: Revised Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

Hello Valoree:

CELA is unable to take on the production at this time and recommended the following source. I just got this information. Do you want to me to see what a quote would be or would you prefer to handle this?

Here is a link to a list of Canadian commercial alternate-format producers, who should be able to provide you with a quote for this work: http://www.cnib.ca/en/useful-links/alternative_format/Pages/default.aspx

Teresa

From: Valoree McKay

Sent: February-12-16 5:25 PM

To: 'Johnson, Teresa Ann (NBPLS/SBPNB)'

Cc: Accessible Collections and Services Network

Subject: RE: Revised Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

Thank you Teresa

I will share this with EC at their next meeting for discussion and approval. Although I cannot commit EC without first discussing with them it is my suspicion that there is not funding available to produce a DAISY text/audio version. Nor do I suspect it is something that we can commit to as the production of a new format could be considered new business. It is perhaps something that the new Federation could look at assuming it takes on responsibility for the CLA developed guidelines (this was discussed but nothing has been finalized yet as the Federation is not yet established to have those discussions).

For now, I will forward to EC for approval and discussion and we can deal with the request for funds to produce a DAISY text/audio version separately. The sooner you can get a cost estimate to me the better. EC meets March 4 and they won't make a decision without a cost to decide on.

Regards,

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From: Johnson, Teresa Ann (NBPLS/SBPNB) [<mailto:teresa.johnson@gnb.ca>]

Sent: February-11-16 11:45 AM

To: Valoree McKay

Cc: Accessible Collections and Services Network; membership

Subject: Revised Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

Hello Valoree:

I am happy to send to you the final version of the updated Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities. The Accessible Collections and Services Network was asked to review and update the guidelines. We established a working group from our Network to discuss what revisions should be made. I took responsibility to revise the document as Network moderator based on input from our Working Group. Grace Dawson from PEI handled gathering feedback from national disability organizations which has been incorporated as appropriate in the document.

It would be ideal to have this document available as a DAISY text/audio file. I have contacted CELA to determine how much it would cost to provide DAISY text/audio but I don't have a cost estimate as yet. The Word version I have attached has been formatted to make it usable with a screen reader, however, a DAISY text/audio file would be optimal.

Would CLA be able to cover a cost to produce a DAISY text/audio version?

Just let me know if you need any other information.

Thanks,

Teresa Johnson

Research & Planning Librarian / Bibliothécaire, recherche et planification

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Canadian Library Association
Association canadienne des bibliothèques

Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities

January 2016

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Introduction

In 1993 a Canadian Library Association (CLA) National Forum was held and identified the need for library guidelines on serving people with disabilities. Extensive consultation and cooperation from across the country resulted in the CLA *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities* released in 1997.

The Canadian Library Association provides the following updated guidelines prepared by CLA's **Accessible Collections and Services Network**, in consultation with national disability organizations¹. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide libraries of varying types, sizes and resources with recommended practices for the provision of accessible and inclusive services. These guidelines shall serve as a resource for strategic planning, policy and service development.

Why Access is Important

Around 15% of the world's population has a disability. According to the World Health Organization, this figure is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the aging process².

In Canada, an estimated 14% of adults (3.8 million people) have a disability. The prevalence of a disability increases steadily with age: 2.3 million working-age Canadians (15 to 64), or 10%, reported having a disability in 2012, compared to 33% of Canadian seniors—those aged 65 or older. The most prevalent types of disability also vary by age. In the youngest age group, 15 to 24, the most commonly reported types of disability were mental/psychological disabilities, learning disabilities and those related to pain, whereas for those aged 45 and up,

¹ For a list of national organizations consulted see the section titled "Acknowledgements".

² United Nations Enable. *Fact Sheet on Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved January 13, 2016.

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=18>

physical disabilities relating to pain, flexibility and mobility were higher. More than 8 out of 10 persons with disabilities use aids or assistive devices³.

In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first human rights convention of the 21st century. In 2010, Canada ratified the convention with the full support of provinces and territories.⁴ On a national level, legislation relating to the protection of the rights of people with disabilities can be found in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Within provinces and territories, the rights of people with disabilities are protected under various human rights legislation. Recent legislative advances, like the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), seek to systematically remove barriers to access for people with disabilities in both the public and private spheres. This legislation seeks to complement existing legislations, such as respective provincial human rights and building codes, through the creation of regulations which remove barriers to access.

As regulations and conventions relating to accessibility are adopted by provinces and local authorities, libraries will be expected to respond accordingly. Libraries have a fundamental responsibility to serve everyone in their community.

Guidelines

These guidelines offer recommendations relating to accessibility while considering as much as possible the different types, sizes and resources of libraries.

³ Statistics Canada. 2015. *A profile of persons with disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years or older, 2012*. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?ObjId=89-654-X2015001&ObjType=46&lang=en>

⁴Parliament of Canada. 2012. *Canada and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2012-89-e.htm>

Library Mandate, Policy and Planning

The library's mandate communicates to users, staff and the community what the library does, what it stands for and why it is done. Through a community-led approach to policy and planning, libraries can provide environments and services that are universally designed: "*usable by all people without the need for adaptation or specialized design*"⁵.

1. Library by-laws or internal governing regulations should include a provision stating that access for people with disabilities is part of its institutional mandate.
2. The library's service standards should affirm that staff treat people with disabilities with the consideration, dignity and respect to which all patrons are entitled. All staff should receive accessible customer service training.
3. Library staff should be familiar with the Principles of Universal Design published by the Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University which will serve to make libraries more inclusive and accessible for all users. Libraries should have a staff member or a resource person in the community that has expertise on universal design.
4. Library management and staff should be familiar with national or provincial/territorial human rights legislations, building codes, and other regulations relating to disabilities and accessibility. To support this, library staff and board members should be provided with copies of national,

⁵ Center for Universal Design. North Carolina State University. Retrieved April 12, 2015.
http://www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm

provincial/territorial and municipal standards and/or guidelines relating to library accessibility.

5. Library staff should refer to documents published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) relating to accessibility. Examples of IFLA sections to be familiar with: *Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section*; *Library Services to People with Special Needs Section*.
6. The library should have policies explaining standard practices and procedures relating to:
 - Anti-discrimination
 - Service accommodation
 - Accessible information
 - Accessible customer service training
 - Use of guide dogs, service animals and support persons
 - Assistive technology, equipment and devices
 - Accessible communication
7. Library staff should use community engagement approaches, with an emphasis on the community-led model, to help reveal service barriers and bring solutions. For one source of information, see the Working Group Project publication: Community-Led Libraries Toolkit.
8. Library advisory committees and library boards should encourage participation by people with disabilities.

9. The library's strategic plan should include accessibility such as physical space (facilities), procurement, programs, library websites, social media, integrated library systems (ILS), collections and equipment. The library should provide annual updates to the community on its progress.

10. The library should have an emergency and evacuation plan that takes into account the safe evacuation of people with disabilities.

11. The library should conduct evaluations of its services to ensure that they are equitable and inclusive to all members of the community. Evaluation methods could include: user and circulation figures and other statistics, focus groups with diverse representatives, interviews, surveys, program evaluations, user suggestions, complaints, and other forms of feedback.

Public Services

Success in delivering accessible public library services involves understanding community needs and providing options. The way in which people access library service should be based on principles of inclusion and respecting the needs of the individual.

1. Libraries should give priority to providing the following types of services:
 - alternative format collections
 - accessible websites, online catalogue, and electronic resources
 - accessible computing devices, assistive devices and software (e.g. screen readers and magnifiers)

- loaning of equipment to access materials in alternative formats (e.g. DAISY players)
 - high speed wireless networks for downloading / streaming online material
 - remote library card registration
 - technology assistance through resources such as library staff, partner organizations, volunteers and peer-to-peer groups
 - staff assistance through such things as e-mail, chat, texting, telephone, fax, relay services⁶, webinars, video tutorials
 - extension services for those unable to visit a library. Examples can include collection deposit services, mobile library services, and books-by-mail services
 - options for extended loan periods and no fines
2. Libraries should use strategies of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide spaces and instruction methods that are favorable for different types of learners. Examples include: offering study rooms and common learning areas, offering visual, hands on and auditory learning activities, and offering instructional materials in advance.
 3. A self-declaration of a perceptual disability (or print disability) should be sufficient for patrons who want to access a library's alternative format collection produced under exemptions in the *Copyright Act*.
 4. When a title is not available in an accessible format, the library should be able to facilitate access to an accessible copy as permitted under the *Copyright Act* for persons with perceptual disabilities. Libraries should not

⁶ For more information on relay services refer to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission Accessible Services: "[Relay Services for People with Hearing or Speech Disabilities](#)"

charge patrons for any costs associated with accessing or creating accessible copies.

5. The library should provide collections and resources on various types of disabilities for public and staff awareness in consultation with national disability organizations.
6. All library staff should be aware of copyright exemptions for people with print disabilities, eligibility requirements and lending policies for materials in alternative formats.

Communications, Marketing and Outreach

Inclusive strategies for communications, marketing and outreach will help to ensure the library is reaching the broadest demographic of users.

1. Library staff should be familiar with “people first language” (for more information, visit: www.disabilityisnatural.com) as well as the federal government pamphlet A Way with Words and Images / Le Pouvoir des Mots et des Images. As the terminology on disabilities changes constantly, library staff should also consult members and representatives of community disability groups on the terminology that should be used.
2. Library staff should use plain language when producing materials for the public. For more information, see the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) Federal Plain Language Guidelines and website as well as CNIB’s Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines.
3. Libraries should use various methods to advertise their services: large print brochures/posters, audio ads on websites, telephone and email alerts, etc.

4. Libraries should have someone proficient in American Sign Language and/or langue des signes québécoises (LSQ) on call, and/or have selected staff trained in ASL/LSQ. For libraries that do not have staff able to communicate in a signing language, the library should use non-verbal communication tools (pen and paper or messages on a mobile device).
5. Library staff should refer to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Toolkit published by the University of Waterloo for best practices in accessible communication (e.g. invitation/session registration, presentations, online events/tests/surveys, billing/receipts, telephone, personal interactions).
6. The library should provide accessible conversion-ready electronic documents intended for the public. Instructions and training for creating conversion-ready documents (e.g. properly created Word and PDF documents) should be made available to library staff. For resources on how to create accessible documents, refer to the Council of Ontario Universities Accessible Digital Documents & Websites. Also refer to the Inclusive Design Research Centre (OCAD University) Accessible Digital Office Document (ADOD) Project. For information on how to provide information in braille, visit Braille Literacy Canada website.
7. Libraries should include captions or transcripts for any videos or audio they produce for public use. For best practices and a directory of service providers and software, refer to the Ontario Council of University Libraries' Report on Accessible Media (ROAM).
8. The library should develop a plan to ensure that web content complies with the most up-to-date Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) that

includes obtaining feedback from people with disabilities. For a tool to check a library website's accessibility, refer to AChecker.ca.

9. Promotion of accessible services should be integrated into the library's overall marketing and communication plan. Libraries should work collaboratively with organizations to ensure joint promotional opportunities and increased communication regarding accessible library services.
10. Internal marketing and training developed for staff and administrators should be an integral part of promoting and improving accessible services.

Budgeting and Procurement

The library's accessible services need to be part of the budget planning and procurement process. Areas for consideration should include the purchase of collections, library equipment, furniture, library systems and contracts with vendors.

1. Steps to making a library's physical facilities and services accessible, and to acquiring adaptive technologies, should be identified in the budgeting process so that improvements can be made in a carefully planned, phased program.
2. The purchase of alternative formats should be part of the collection budget process. Where accessible formats are not readily available, procurement decisions should be documented and contingency plans developed as to how accessible formats can be secured to accommodate a patron request.

3. As part of the procurement of library systems and digital services, the library should prioritize vendors that provide services that are fully accessible.
4. Electronic licensing agreements should include a clause or clauses that permit(s) making a copy of the licensed materials in an alternative format for people with disabilities. See [Ontario Council University Libraries Model Licenses](#) for some examples.
5. Libraries should refer to the [Accessibility Information Toolkit for Libraries](#) prepared by the Ontario Council of University Libraries for best practices in procurement.

Human Resources and Training

Building staff knowledge and skills about disabilities, alternative formats and assistive technologies are essential to providing accessible services in a fully integrated way.

1. An ongoing training program should be in place for library administrators, existing staff, new employees, volunteers, and library board members to heighten awareness and sensitivity, identify skill sets and provide information on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, and help develop positive and appropriate attitudes. Library training should cover different types of disabilities, such as:
 - Learning disabilities
 - Visual disabilities
 - Physical disabilities
 - Mental illness
 - Speech or language disabilities

- Developmental or intellectual disabilities
 - Hearing disabilities
 - Sensory disabilities
2. Persons with disabilities and representatives of disability groups should be participants in staff training sessions.
 3. Training policies and procedures should include guidelines regarding confidentiality, equitable service and equal access for people with disabilities.
 4. The library should compile a list of persons and organizations with particular expertise regarding various forms of disability in their community.
 5. The library should make every attempt to hire both paid employees and volunteers with disabilities. This policy should be made transparent in job advertisements and the interviewing process.
 6. While all library staff should have basic accessibility knowledge, one staff member should be designated as the resource person responsible for the library's accessible services: to provide information for both staff and the public; to coordinate activities and services; to keep informed of developments and trends and share this information with colleagues; to act as liaison with community disability groups; and to serve as internal coordinator within the library. All staff should be able to respond to questions that do not require expertise in disability issues, e.g., a person with a disability should not be referred automatically to the coordinator for

accessibility services but be directly served by library staff as any other library patron/user.

Collections Management

Depending on the mandate of the library (special, academic or public library) the content of collections will differ; however, providing a diverse range of formats will remain common across all library types.

1. A library's collection development policy should include procurement of alternative formats wherever possible.
2. The acquisitions process should include the purchase of titles in formats that everyone can use as well as specialized formats.
3. Acquisitions should include input from consumers and specialists in the field as well as user input to test usability of vendor platforms and content.
4. Libraries should collaborate with local authors and publishers to increase the availability of titles that are accessible at source, providing them with specific feedback as to how their content can be improved.

Resource Sharing

The most cost-effective strategy for libraries to expand the scope of the alternative format collections they provide is through resource sharing. Libraries can also partner with publishers, vendors and organizations to avoid duplication of effort in producing alternative formats.

1. Acquisition policies should consider resource-sharing opportunities.
2. Libraries producing alternative format holdings should:
 - refer to the National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for standards and best practices;
 - maintain a collection of master files for resource-sharing; and
 - report items to Library and Archives Canada under the Union Catalogue Program.
3. Libraries should refer to Library and Archives Canada's Symbols and Interlibrary Loan Policies in Canada for library lending information and policies.
4. Libraries should promote and participate in networks of local, provincial/territorial, regional, national and international libraries and institutions to ensure availability of alternative format materials through interlibrary loan, cooperative or subscription based programs. Some examples of Canadian alternative format repositories include members of the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials (CAER) (for K-12 sector), the Alternative Education Resources for Ontario (for publicly funded educational institutions in Ontario), the Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE) (for Ontario University Libraries), the Service québécois du livre adapté offered through the BANQ (for Quebec residents), the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) (for public libraries across Canada). An example of a repository available internationally includes Bookshare.

Assistive Devices and Technology

As more than 8 out of 10 Canadians with disabilities use aids and assistive devices⁷, a library environment that provides assistive technologies will enable people to access library services with greater independence and privacy.

1. The library's website and online catalogue should be compatible with assistive technologies. Library staff responsible for providing these services should receive training on web accessibility and assistive technologies. Visit [WebAIM](#) for resources for administrators, developers and designers.
2. Libraries should provide public workstation(s) that are routinely maintained and equipped with furniture, hardware and software to meet the needs of people with various types of disabilities. Examples include: height adjustable desks, large screen monitors, roller track mice, large print colour contrast keyboards, screen magnification and screen reading software.
3. Library staff should be familiar with how to use relay services for people with hearing or speech disabilities. For more information visit the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission Accessible Services: [Relay Services for People with Hearing or Speech Disabilities](#).

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2015. *A profile of persons with disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years or older, 2012*. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-olc.action?ObjId=89-654-X2015001&ObjType=46&lang=en>

4. Libraries should provide assistive reading devices to support the use of alternative format collections.
5. Disclosure of a disability should not be required to use the library's assistive devices or technologies to respect an individual's privacy.
6. As many staff members as possible should be familiar with the assistive devices and technologies offered by the library, so that patrons and employees can be assisted in using the device when the official troubleshooter is not available.
7. User manuals and instructions should be available for both staff and the public. Manuals and instruction sheets should be accessible in alternative formats.
8. Major purchases should be planned on the basis of user needs assessment, consultation with focus groups, and research into (a) costs of maintaining, servicing, and using the equipment; (b) availability of identical or compatible equipment in local disability centres or other libraries; (c) evaluations or other information on performance, cost, and reliability of the product.
9. Service contracts with vendors should include training and troubleshooting as well as a demonstration of accessibility features of tools and platforms.

Physical Access

A barrier-free design helps to ensure that the library facility is welcoming to all users. As libraries are required to follow applicable federal, provincial or municipal building codes and by-laws, they should also consider the following:

1. Library staff should be familiar with the accessibility standards outlined in the latest edition of the National Building Code of Canada and the Accessible Design for the Built Environment for planning new library facilities or retrofitting/renovating existing facilities.
2. The library environment should provide:
 - accessible public transportation routes to the library
 - wheelchair and scooter access. This includes parking areas, library entrance(s), pathways (interior/exterior), aisles, washrooms, programming rooms and service desks;
 - evenly distributed (non flickering) light both outside and inside the library;
 - variety of lighting options in reading areas;
 - hearing loop system for use at service desks and assembly areas;
 - sound absorbent walls and floors;
 - non-slip floors;
 - contrasting tones on walls, floors and doorways;
 - audible and visual emergency alarm systems;
 - tactile and visually contrasting path from the front door to the reception desk;
 - glare-free, tactile, colour-contrasted signage;
 - family washroom;
 - quiet room/area with soft furnishings/lighting;

- scent free environment.
3. Libraries should consult with people with disabilities prior to building a new facility or retrofitting an existing library. User committees made up of people from the disability community should be formed to identify accessibility needs.

Advocacy

All library staff and trustees have a responsibility to advocate for equitable access to library services at regional, national and international levels by making recommendations to government(s). To facilitate advocacy on accessibility issues:

1. Library schools, library technician and teacher-librarian programs should incorporate accessible library services into their curriculum, including a review of any relevant legislation, examples of library services and the emphasis on the value of customer/community-led approaches for emerging professionals.
2. Library staff and trustees should be proactive in keeping up to date on library accessibility issues, attending accessibility related conferences and actively engaging with accessibility listservs.
3. Experts in the field should be invited to deliver training workshops and presentations highlighting emerging technologies and innovative solutions towards building inclusive learning environments for all library patrons.

4. Libraries should partner with similar and external organizations to collaborate on projects, to reduce duplication of effort and to ensure that a consistent level of quality is achieved in the procurement or production of accessible formats and services across different organizations, making it a seamless process for users who frequent several libraries.

5. Libraries should work with publishers to advocate for accessible materials at source.

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In revising this document, the following organizations were consulted for feedback:

Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
Autism Society of Canada
Canadian Association of the Deaf
Canadian Council of the Blind
Canadian Federation of the Blind
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

National Education Association of Disabled Students

Vision Impaired Resource Network

Canadian Association for Community Living

Neil Squire Society

Independent Living Canada

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format
Materials

Notes

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Canadian Guidelines on Library Information Services for People with Disabilities

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