

Universal Access: Customer Service Toolkit

Public Library Services Branch

Manitoba 

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this Customer Service Toolkit should not be taken as legal advice. For legal advice on the *Accessibility for Manitoban's Act (AMA)* and the associated regulations, please consult your legal counsel. The information contained in this toolkit is designed to act as a resource for libraries when developing their own local policies in compliance with the associated regulations.

LINKS

At the time of publication, all of the links within the document were correct and functioning.

Available in alternate formats upon request.

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Introduction

In December 2013, Manitoba passed the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA). The purpose of the act is to prevent and remove barriers that impede persons with disabilities from accessing public and private sector services, buildings and information. This is achievable for every public library in Manitoba through a collaborative, community-led approach that seeks to identify and remove barriers to universal library access. As sites of learning, creation and interaction in communities, libraries are uniquely positioned to meet the changing needs of community members by providing access to information, technology and programming – all supported by the best customer service possible.

When developing services and the policies and practices that support their implementation, libraries are required to consider patrons' physical, mental, intellectual and sensory needs. Doing so will ensure the values of universal access are upheld and that the library is meeting the needs of every patron.

The *Universal Access: Customer Service Toolkit* has been developed to provide libraries with tools and skills they need to meet the requirements set out in the AMA and the accompanying Customer Service Standard Regulation. This toolkit includes resources created by libraries and library organizations, as well as sample policies and processes that libraries are advised to adapt to meet local needs.

This toolkit was produced by the Manitoba Public Library Services Branch, in consultation with Manitoba's public libraries and community partners. The Government of Manitoba would like to thank the Western

Manitoba Regional Library and the Winnipeg Public Library for hosting a series of focus groups, which were essential to the development of this document. These focus groups provided an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and community partners and contributed to the development of a sector-wide approach to an accessible public library service for Manitoba.

CHECKLIST FOR LIBRARIES

All libraries must:

- prepare and keep records in relation to all activities which support universal access, including measures, policies and practices
- meet the timelines set out in the act and regulations
- beginning in 2016 and every second year thereafter, create an accessibility plan
- establish and implement measures, policies and practices respecting barrier-free access to the goods or services the library provides
- obtain feedback from consumer groups on aspects of the measures, policies and practices implemented by the library which meet the communication needs of patrons
- provide staff training on accessible customer service

Links to the legislation:

- <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/pdf/b026.pdf>

PART 1

Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* contains three sections which require direct action on the part of libraries: Sections 18, 20, and 33. Section 18 requires libraries to maintain records related to the development and implementation of an accessibility plan. Section 20 requires that libraries comply with accessibility regulations. And section 33 requires that libraries prepare an accessibility plan, and do so in consultation with community members.

AMA Section 18: Accessibility Records

The head librarian or designate is responsible for maintaining records in accordance with an accessibility standard and, as part of an investigation, making them available for inspection and examination. Documentation must be maintained under sections 10, 11, and 14 of the Customer Service Standard Regulation (CSSR). Sections 11 and 14 of the CSSR apply only to municipal and regional library systems with 20 or more employees.

See CSSR [Section 10: Feedback Regarding Accessible Customer Service](#)

See CSSR [Section 11: Documentation Regarding Measures](#)

See CSSR [Section 14: Documentation Regarding Training](#)

Section 20: Compliance with an Accessibility Standard

Under this section, libraries are required to comply with an accessibility standard within the time period specified in the standard.

See [Section 3: Application and Phase-in of Obligations](#) of the CSSR

Section 33: Accessibility Plans and a Duty to Consult

The AMA requires that in 2016 and every second year thereafter, libraries create an accessibility plan in consultation with community members and organizations that support or represent persons disabled by barriers. Once completed, the library is required to make the plan publicly available. It is recommended that libraries post their accessibility plan on their website and make printed copies available in the library.

When completing an accessibility plan, the library must pay close attention to the guiding principles of the AMA:

Access: People should have barrier-free access to places, events and other functions that are generally available in the community.

Equality: People should have barrier-free access to those things that will give them equality of opportunity and outcome.

Universal design: Access should be provided in a manner that does not establish or perpetuate differences based on a person's impairment.

Systemic responsibility: The responsibility to prevent and remove barriers rests with the person or organization that is responsible for establishing or perpetuating the barrier.

The AMA requires that all accessibility plans include the following three components:

1. Measures the library has taken, and intends to take, in order to identify, prevent and remove barriers
2. Measures in place to assess the following to determine their effect on accessibility:
 - proposed policies, programs, practices and services
 - proposed enactments or by-laws that will be administered
3. Any other information that is relevant to the accessibility plan

To support the development of accessibility plans, the [Disabilities Issues Office](#) has developed a [Guide for Public Sector Organizations: How to Create Your Accessibility Plan](#). In addition, the Government of Manitoba's website accessibilitymb.ca contains resources to support organizations in complying with the legislation.

See [Appendix A](#) for a format for completing an Accessibility Plan.

See [Appendix A](#) for an approach to organizing a focus group, which libraries can use to collaborate with community members and organizations to gather the information necessary to complete the accessibility plan.

To support the implementation of the Duty to Consult requirements, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- Using a community-led approach, all library services and programs will be developed in consultation with individuals, consumer groups and advocacy organizations representing people with disabilities.

PART 2

Customer Service Standard Regulation

The *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* sets out the requirement for creating standards to facilitate the prevention and removal of barriers to universal access. The Customer Service Standard Regulation (CSSR) sets out the policy requirements for providing universally accessible customer services in public libraries.

It is important for libraries to understand that where barriers to library access exist, customer service policies and procedures can be developed in the short term to mitigate the impact of identified barriers on patrons. Medium- and long-term solutions that remove barriers will require that libraries create a formal plan – which includes financial planning – to ensure universal access to libraries for all Manitobans.

DEFINITIONS

It is recommended that libraries adopt the following definitions when developing policy:

Assistive Device – a tool used to assist patrons in accessing services.

Barrier – see Section 1 of the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

Library Premises – buildings or land owned and/or operated by the library.

Library Services – includes, but is not limited to reference, referral and readers' services, collections, lending, technology, programming and outreach.

Service Animal – see Section 1 of the Manitoba *Human Rights Code*.

Support Person – see Section 1 of the *Customer Service Standard Regulation*.

Head Librarian – an employee (permanent or acting) of the library, who is responsible to the library board for reporting on all aspects of library service delivery and planning; sometimes referred to as president, chief executive officer (CEO), executive director or chief librarian.

SCOPE

To ensure that library patrons receive the best possible customer service experience each time they come into the library, library policies and procedures must apply to all agents of the library who provide direct customer service to the public or provide leadership and direction to the library. This includes:

1. library employees
2. volunteers
3. other agents of the library, including:
 - a. students on placement
 - b. board members
 - c. contracted persons/organizations delivering a service on the library's behalf

Library policies on accessibility do not extend to persons or organizations renting property owned or rented by the library.

Section 3: Application and Phase-in of Obligations

Manitoba's public libraries have until November 1st, 2017 to comply with the Customer Service Standard Regulation.

Section 4: Barrier-Free Access to Goods and Services

The following measures, policies and practices can be adapted to meet the local need for barrier-free access to library items and services.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Language reflects the values and the beliefs of a society. It is essential that Manitoba's libraries adopt an inclusive common language to facilitate staff education and to inform discussion within the library community. The [Disabilities Issues Office](#) (DIO) recommends using person-first language. To support this practice, the DIO has developed *Words with Dignity*, an awareness document, which demonstrates a best-practice approach to the use of inclusive language. It is recommended that libraries post this document in a place that is easily accessible to staff and to provide staff training on person-first language. The Association of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters of Manitoba ([ATIM](#)) has a members' directory for libraries looking to translate this or any document into a number of languages used in Manitoba.

ACTIVE OFFER SIGNS

To identify the availability of accessible services and materials, it is recommended that libraries post the Government of Manitoba Active Offer sign at each customer service desk. For those unable to read the active offer sign, customer service staff will need to indicate that the library offers services and materials in ways that are universally accessible. Libraries are encouraged to translate the active offer signs into languages that reflect the needs of their communities.

ACTIVE OFFER – PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Programming is an essential core service of libraries. To make sure that libraries have the information they need in order to ensure the full participation of all registrants, it is recommended that the library includes the following language on all registration forms.

Please check (✓) any support or other accommodations that you may require:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Braille | <input type="radio"/> Computerized Note Taker |
| <input type="radio"/> Large Print | |
| <input type="radio"/> Visual Language Interpreter | <input type="radio"/> I will be bringing a Personal Attendant |
| <input type="radio"/> Mobility Needs | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Dexterity Needs | |

Information gathered will be used to source available accommodations.

CUSTOMER SERVICE BEST PRACTICES

To support best practices in customer service, libraries and library organizations in Canada and the United States have produced training documents and videos for front-line staff and administrators seeking to improve services to persons with disabilities. An important lesson indicated throughout these training documents is that everyone is an expert in knowing their own needs. Therefore it is imperative that librarians ask patrons about their needs. It is recommended that libraries utilize the following training documents when developing customer service practices of their own:

- The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) developed *Interacting with Persons with Disabilities* to help educators provide a positive learning environment.
- The Ontario Library Association (OLA) produced a series of training videos and has compiled a list of online training resources entitled *Accessible Library Services for Persons with Disabilities* to support the implementation of *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.
- The *Libraries and Autism We're Connected*, a project of the Scotch Plains Public Library and Fanwood Memorial Library, has produced a training video on how to best serve people on the autism spectrum.
- To support inclusive services for persons with disabilities, the British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) developed a *Disability Awareness Toolkit*, which is available in the Library Toolshed.
- The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) has developed tools to support library accessibility. *Library Accessibility –What You Need to Know* provides libraries with resources pages that support the provision of accessible services to patrons with a wide range of disabilities.

- [Supporting Students with Disabilities](#) is a resource website developed by academic libraries in New Brunswick that provides information on the impact disabilities can have on learning.

GREETING PATRONS

Public libraries are dynamic, highly organized spaces. However, the way in which the physical layout of the library is organized may not always be apparent to patrons when entering. Greeting a patron is an opportunity to inform and assist the patron in accessing library services. It is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- Every patron is greeted upon entering the library.

UNOCCUPIED LIBRARY SPACES

Libraries, at their best, are busy community spaces where many different activities occur simultaneously. While this is a sign of healthy library service, for some, the experience of entering a library can be overstimulating and overwhelming. To address this issue, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- When not being used, activity or public meeting rooms will be made available to persons whose sensory needs require a lower level of stimulation.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Libraries are a place where the public can enjoy lifelong learning through the development of literacy skills and through activities and programs. To ensure that everyone is provided the same opportunity for learning, libraries need to develop programming using the principles of *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL). Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning mandates that UDL practices be used in classrooms. Information on UDL in Manitoba classrooms can be found in the document *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services*. Those seeking to improve services to persons with autism can consult the *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. To transition to the use of Universal Design for Learning, it is recommended that the library adopt the following policies:

- The library recognizes its responsibility to provide a supportive learning environment where patrons are able to explore their personal interests to the fullest extent possible.
- The library will develop program and service plans to meet the full range of diverse needs of patrons using the principles of Universal Design for Learning. This will provide access to learning and facilitate interaction with other members of the community, regardless of their diverse needs.
- To ensure children are fully involved in programming, their parents, guardians or caregivers will be consulted regarding their children's specific needs.

(Adapted from *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services*.)

To support the implementation of UDL, it is recommended that the following critical questions be asked when developing programming and services:

1. Can all patrons access and engage in all library programming opportunities?
2. What strategies exist to ensure all patrons are included?
3. What strategies exist to eliminate barriers that might segregate or stigmatize a patron?

(Adapted from *Manitoba Education and Universal Design Guiding Questions*.)

SENSORY STORYTIMES

Utilizing the principles of UDL, libraries have developed *Sensory Storytimes* to address the sensory needs of children on the autism spectrum while acquiring literacy skills. To support the development of *Sensory Storytimes*, a number of American libraries, library organizations and state departments have published training videos. It is recommended that library staff view the following training videos and collaborate with local community organizations and families to address the service needs of children and families living with autism.

- [*Special Needs Sensory Storytimes*](#) from the Utah Library Association and Utah State Library
- [*Online Learning Archive - Special Needs Programming*](#) from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

See [Appendix B](#) for a basic Sensory Storytime format.

SOCIAL STORIES

A social story is another tool that addresses the sensory needs of children on the autism spectrum. It is a pre-teaching tool that allows children to gain visual familiarity with an activity so they can be more comfortable with its structure and routine. The social story sensitizes the individual to their environment, making it easier to interact with others and engage in their surroundings. Follow the links below to view examples of social stories and to learn more about how they are used by libraries.

- [A customizable social story template](#) to introduce people to your library, from *Libraries and Autism: We're Connected*
- [Social Stories: Supporting Children with Special Needs](#), a blog post by Renee Grassi on the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Blog

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

The library is a community service that should be available to every member of the community. Most library policies require patrons to show photo identification in order to obtain a library card. However, not everyone has access to photo identification. To ensure universal access to persons without photo identification, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- A membership type will be identified which allows persons without photo identification to obtain a library card.

TRAINING FOR THE PUBLIC

Building awareness of library policies and services to persons with disabilities requires connecting with community members and advocacy groups. To support the marketing of library services that address the accessibility needs of the community, it is recommended that the library provide training to the public on services to people with disabilities. It is recommended that the target audience for this training be:

- community organizations
- people with disabilities
- caregivers

It is recommended that the training include:

- library policies
- services
- the availability and use of assistive technology and equipment at the library

Section 5: Communications

Measures, policies and practices contained in the section are to be developed and documented as per [Section 4](#) of the CSSR.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

To communicate with persons who have difficulty speaking, it is recommended that the library adopt the following practices:

- When a patron has difficulty forming words, staff will listen to everything the patron has to say before asking them to repeat themselves, where necessary.

- Patrons can be asked to speak slower or louder, as needed by the employee providing customer service.
- Once finished speaking, staff may repeat what they have heard to ensure they have fully understood what has been communicated.
- To facilitate communication, staff may consider using a non-verbal communication tool or device.
- Staff will refrain from pretending they have understood the patron.
- Staff will refrain from interrupting the patron when they are speaking.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

There are many reasons why a person may not be able to communicate verbally. Each one requires an appropriate and thoughtful response by library staff to facilitate communication. Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) provides [education tools](#) for persons wanting to learn more about how to communicate with persons with a communication disability. To facilitate non-verbal communication, it is recommended that the library adopt the following practices:

- Endeavour to use whatever communication device a person brings to communicate (ex: a pen and paper)
- Make inquiry services, requests, reservations and renewal services available through the library website, phone, text message and email

VISUAL LANGUAGE SERVICES

Requests for visual language supports will require time and planning in order to book appropriate services and notify the patron of their availability. To identify persons and organizations that provide visual language services, libraries can contact [Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters](#). It is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- Patrons seeking visual language service must make a formal written request at least two weeks in advance of the program/event.
- The library will fill all requests for visual language services unless the service is unavailable.
- The library is required to notify the patron if the request for service is denied due to the unavailability of visual language support services.
- When a request is denied, the library will collaborate with the patron to provide alternative accommodations.
- The written communication from the patron will be considered consent to utilize the patron's personal information to notify the patron that visual language service has or has not been obtained.

Please note: Visual language interpreters are to act as neutral third-party translators. Library staff and patrons will need to refrain from engaging the visual language interpreter(s) in conversation. They are only to facilitate the communication of the patron seeking communication services.

Section 6: Assistive Devices

Measures, policies and practices contained in this section are to be developed and documented as per Section 4 of the CSSR.

The use of assistive devices can enhance a patron's library experience, regardless of whether the device is brought from home or borrowed from the library. To support the use of assistive devices, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- Patrons are encouraged to bring their own assistive device(s) to the library.

Some assistive devices may be specific to library use or may be too cumbersome to bring to the library. To meet the needs of the patrons who require in-library assistive devices, it is recommended that the library adopt the following policy:

- The library will develop a process for assessing the need to purchase assistive devices identified by patrons.

Section 7: Support Persons

Measures, policies and practices contained in this section are to be developed and documented as per Section 4 of the CSSR.

The role of the support person is to ensure that individuals are able to access the community, including the library, and, as necessary, receive support to access services. It is recommended that libraries adopt the following policies:

SUPPORT PERSONS

- Patrons requiring a support person are encouraged to bring their support person to access all library programs, services and events. Patrons will have full access to the support person while on the library premises.

PAYING FOR PROGRAM/EVENT WITH A SUPPORT PERSON

- Neither the patron nor the support person will be required to pay for the support person's attendance at a library organized program or event.

INTERACTING WITH A SUPPORT PERSON

- When a patron speaks with staff while being accompanied by a support person, staff will speak directly with the patron. All aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication will be directed at the patron. The patron may choose to introduce or not introduce their support person.
- When providing customer service on a topic that is generally considered private in nature, library staff will ask the patron if they would like the support person to remain present.

ATTENDING A PROGRAM/EVENT WITH A SUPPORT PERSON

- Patrons attending a library program or event with a support person will need to notify the library of their support person's attendance at the time of registration. The support person will be counted as part of program attendance.
- A support person would not be able to attend if the patron did not inform the library of the support person's attendance and if the support person's attendance would result in exceeding the allowable fire regulation.

Section 8: Service Animals

Measures, policies and practices contained in this section are to be developed and documented as per [Section 4](#) of the CSSR.

Manitoba's [Service Animals Protection Act](#) and The [Manitoba Human Rights Code](#) govern the responsibilities and the requirements of libraries when serving persons with a service animal. It is important to understand that persons who use a service animal are not required to license or register their service animal. There are a number of animals that provide support to persons with vision loss, diabetes, autism, agoraphobia and hearing loss. To ensure that libraries are able to best respond to the needs of persons who use a service animal, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- The library will welcome all service animals.
- Staff will refrain from touching or otherwise interacting with a service animal.

Section 9: Built Environment

Measures, policies and practices contained in the section are to be developed and documented as per [Section 4](#) of the CSSR.

The library premises are an essential component of providing a high quality patron experience. To ensure that all current and future accessibility features are available for their intended use, it is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- The library will not make use of any building features (ramps, automatic doors, etc.) in a way that would inhibit the ability of a patron to gain access to the library premises.

The library is required to notify the public of any disruption of access to the premises as soon as possible. It is recommended that libraries adopt the following policy:

- The library will provide notice of any disruption of access to the library's premises or services, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities for service, if any, that may be available.
- In the event of an unplanned disruption of access to the library's premises or services, notice will be provided to the public as soon as possible.
- Notice will be provided on the library's website or by other means, as applicable to the situation.

Section 10: Feedback On Services

Under Section 10, the library is responsible for developing a system for receiving and responding to feedback from the public with regards to the measures, policies and practices it develops and implements under [Section 4](#) of the CSSR. Where possible, it is recommended the library provide multiple means of providing feedback. The library must also provide notices that all documentation it creates around receiving and responding to feedback is made available to the public. It is recommended that feedback be received through the following channels:

- online submission form
- email
- telephone
- mail
- in person

It is recommended that the library utilize the following statement to encourage feedback through the above communication channels:

- The library welcomes all feedback from the public regarding all aspects of the way the library delivers programs and services. If you have feedback, please use the following methods (list of methods with contact information).

It is recommended that the library respond to feedback in a way that meets the needs of the person providing feedback.

It is recommended that the library's annual report includes a summary of all feedback received and identifies specific initiatives undertaken by the library to remove barriers resulting from patron feedback. See [Part 1 Section 18: Accessibility Records](#).

Where this is not possible, it is recommended that the library produce a summary report on all feedback received and identify specific initiatives undertaken by the library to remove barriers resulting from patron feedback.

Section 11: Documentation Regarding Measures

Under Section 11, the library must document the measures, policies and practices it establishes and implements under [Section 4](#) of the CSSR and provide notice that documentation is available upon request. Notice must be available on the library's:

- website
- premises
- other available means, as applicable under the circumstances.

Once the documentation is requested, the library must ensure that the documentation is available:

- within a reasonable amount of time
 - it is recommended that the library provide this within 30 days of the patron’s request
- at no cost to the patron
- in a format which meets the information needs of the patron

This applies only to municipal and regional library systems with 20 or more employees.

See [Part 1 Section 18: Accessibility Records](#).

Section 12: Compliance

Under Section 12, the library is responsible for complying with the measures, policies and practices that it establishes and implements under Section 4.

Section 13: Training for Staff

The success of accessibility-focused initiatives in libraries is dependent on a strong commitment to staff training on the part of library administrators. It is required by CSSR that all library staff who provide front line service receive training on inclusive approaches to customer service. For a list of personnel recommended to receive customer service training, see [Part 2: Scope](#). It is required that all agents of the library who provide direct customer service receive the following training in support of barrier-free customer service:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons disabled by barriers
2. How to interact with persons disabled by barriers who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a support person or service animal
3. How to use any equipment or assistive devices that may be available to assist persons disabled by barriers
4. What to do if someone is having difficulty accessing goods or services
5. Purpose and principles of *The Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and applicable regulations

Additional training recommended for libraries:

1. Disability awareness
2. Non-violent crisis intervention
3. Mental health crisis response training

Training is to be provided within a reasonable amount of time after commencing employment and not to exceed the term of an employee's probationary period.

Ongoing training is to be provided in connection with changes to the library's measures, policies and practices in support of universal access.

All contract and sub-contract employees must either provide proof that they have completed training applicable to the specifications of their employment or receive appropriate training as identified by the library.

Board members are also encouraged to participate in library staff training in support of barrier-free access.

Section 14: Documentation regarding Training

Under Section 14, the library must document its training policy. The documentation must include a summary of the content of the training and when the training is to be provided.

Applies only to municipal and regional library systems with 20 or more employees.

See [Part 1: Section 18 Accessibility Records](#).

Please note: The head librarian, or designate, is responsible for maintaining all records of employee training on the employee's personnel file. It is recommended that the head librarian, or designate, document when training was provided to each employee.

Section 15: Accessibility of Public Events

Under Section 15, the library must work to ensure that when holding a public meeting, hearing or consultation, it seeks to remove any barriers that would prohibit a member of the public from attending or fully participating in the meeting. It is recommended that the library adopt the following processes when planning a public meeting, hearing or consultation:

- Notify the public that the library will be holding a public consultation using multiple means, including print and digital media:
Ex: poster, sign at a circulation desk, website communication and social media.
- Identify a barrier-free space in which to hold the meeting. It is recommended that the space is wheelchair accessible and is brightly lit.

- All written documents comply with [Clear Print Guidelines](#), including handouts and presentation materials.
- In advance of the meeting, the library will need to indicate to the public that they can contact the library to identify the kinds of supports they require in order to fully participate. Notice can be provided using the following language:

[The library] will be hosting a public [meeting, hearing, consultation] on [date and time]. As part of our responsibility to provide library services to every member of the community, the library will seek to ensure a barrier-free [meeting, hearing, consultation] that includes every member of our community. To meet our commitment to barrier-free access, we request that any member of the public requiring additional support to fully participate in the [meeting, hearing, consultation] communicate with a member of our team. We are committed to working with every member of our community to ensure that we provide the highest quality of service possible.

- Once an individual has requested support to participate in the meeting, hearing or consultation, the library will need to work closely with the individual to meet their needs.

APPENDIX A:

Community Focus Group Guide

The following process utilizes an asset-based approach to removing barriers to library access. The goal is to not only identify barriers to library access, but to identify existing infrastructure that the library can leverage to remove barriers to access.

Process for Community Consultation

As part of a focus group, members of the library and disability community will work together to answer the following questions and complete the following activities.

Each of the four parts is to be completed in small groups made up of members of the library and disability communities. Each group should be as diverse as possible to facilitate discussion. Each part listed below can be written on flip chart-sized paper.

Once the documentation is completed, it is recommended that the information be organized into themes and used to inform the accessibility plan for the library.

PART 1:

- Do you use a library?
- If yes, why?
- If not, why?

PART 2:

What programs or services does your library currently have to better serve persons with a disability?

PART 3

Take a tour of the library, then think about and respond to the following question: what barriers to library access can you identify?

Participants should consider each of the following when identifying barriers to library access:

- architecture
- attitudes
- communication
- information
- technology
- policies and practices established or perpetuated by the library

Based on interest or expertise, groups can be assigned themes to investigate.

PART 4

In thinking about the work we have done together, identify possible solutions to the barriers to access.

Solutions should be identified as being short-, medium- and long-term in nature.

APPENDIX B: Framework for Sensory Storytime

When developing and implementing a Sensory Storytime at your library, the head librarian or designate will need to collaborate with the local autism and autism support community, including speech language pathologists on the format of the program. Below is a sample format adapted from the *Serving the Underserved: Children with Disabilities at Your Library* WebJunction Seminar.

- Length: one hour long, with 30 minutes for storytime and 30 minutes for play
- Audience: children aged four to eight, with a caregiver

MATERIALS

- visual schedule of activities during Storytime
- CD player or musical instrument
- toys to support play
- designated seating mat or chair for each child in attendance

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Review visual schedule
2. "Hello" to each child
3. Introductory Song
4. Book
5. Song
6. Felt Board Activity
7. Book
8. Song
9. Playtime
10. Bubbles
11. Song
12. Goodbye song

Works Consulted

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