

Library Service for People with Print Disabilities Operational Policy for Public Libraries

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Network Policy Statement

The Government of Alberta has established and sustains a network known as the Alberta Public Library Network that connects Alberta's public libraries to enable access to public library resources and services for Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by Alberta Municipal Affairs through Public Library Services Branch (PLSB).

Statement of Purpose

Libraries have a fundamental responsibility to provide equitable access to library collections, resources, and facilities. All facets of library service should be made available to every community member. The Alberta Public Library Network aims to support public libraries in the provision of equitable access to library resources for all Albertans.

This operational policy establishes principles and guidelines for the effective selection of resources to help support Alberta public libraries serve patrons with print disabilities.

Equitable access to public libraries for people with print disabilities includes:

- facilitating engagement and full participation in library services and resources for all people in the community, including those unable to use conventional print
- creating and adhering to policies that ensure the library is meeting the needs of all people in the community, including those unable to use conventional print
- collecting and making available material in alternate/accessible formats

Policy

The Government of Alberta supports public libraries in the provision of library services for people with print disabilities

1. The Government of Alberta will support access to library resources that make conventional print material available in accessible formats.
2. Albertans who have a print disability will have access to resources provided by Alberta public libraries through the network at no additional charge.
3. The local public library has primary responsibility for developing and providing accessible library service at the local level. Resources supported by the Government of Alberta are meant to complement and support, not replace or substitute, existing library services.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Municipal library boards have primary responsibility for acquiring and providing library resources, including alternate-format material, in response to local needs.

2. System library boards have a role in acquiring and providing library resources including electronic resources in response to system member needs.
3. The Government of Alberta has a role in providing electronic resources in response to provincial needs, where provincial acquisition is efficient, effective, and/or otherwise appropriate.
4. The Government of Alberta relies on the partnership with the Public Library Network participants to facilitate access to the resources.
 - a. As per the *Public Library Network Policy* (2012), the Nodes are responsible for administering the resources, and the network participants are responsible for making the resources freely available to local users.
5. For evaluative purposes, the Government of Alberta may require feedback/statistics from Nodes and network participants on service to people with print disabilities.

Definitions

Print Disability: A print disability falls under the definition of a perceptual disability as defined in the *Copyright Act*.

As per Section 2 of the *Copyright Act*, a perceptual disability is defined as:

a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from

- a. severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus one's eyes,
- b. the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or
- c. an impairment relating to comprehension.

Operational Guidelines

- a) As a fundamental part of equitable library service, services and resources for people with print disabilities should be fully integrated into regular library operations.
- b) In accordance with provincial legislation, *Libraries Regulation* 7(2)(d), Alberta public libraries are required to establish local policy with respect to the "provision of library resources to persons unable to use conventional print resources, including provision in cooperation with community agencies."
- c) PLSB supports access to resources that respond to the needs of people with print disabilities.
- d) PLSB participates in local and national networks that respond to the needs of people with print disabilities.
- e) Expanding access to information for all Albertans is an ongoing priority of public libraries and PLSB. For example: easy access to content, accessible programming, self-declaration of a print disability.