multi-year accessibility plan
2023 status report

If you identify as a person with a disability or a person who is Deaf, and require this document in an accessible format, please contact accessibleservices@tpl.ca, call 416-393-7099 or use the online form to make a request.

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statement of commitment

Toronto Public Library (TPL) is committed to providing equitable access to library service that meets the changing needs of all Torontonians, including persons with disabilities, in a welcoming and supportive environment. The Library will develop and support a work and service environment where the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in accordance with the principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity, and integration. TPL will meet and exceed the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations.

In developing and delivering services and programs to persons with disabilities, the Library will be guided by the service values of equity and diversity in the treatment of individuals. The Library will establish, implement and monitor policies, services and practices that balance the needs of persons with disabilities and others to support the accessibility standards of customer service, information and communication, employment and the built environment, established under the AODA.

about the multi-year accessibility plan

In December 2021, the City Librarian and Directors approved the Toronto Public Library's 2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). The Library's Board of Directors subsequently endorsed this Plan in June 2022.

As a foundational piece of TPL's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Program, the MYAP serves as the Library's long-term accessibility road map, outlining our vision, outcomes and actions that will foster the accessibility of our digital and physical spaces, services, programs, and employment practices.

The MYAP, in conjunction with the Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy, helps to ensure TPL continues to meet the individual accessibility needs of our employees and customers with disabilities.

With a total of 64 MYAP initiatives, and 9-17 initiatives under each of the relevant accessibility standards, this status report outlines TPL's progress on developing and delivering these initiatives throughout 2023 to advance accessibility and inclusion across the Library.

executive summary

The 2023 MYAP status report outlines our yearly progress on the development and delivery of the various MYAP initiatives to remove barriers and advance accessibility and inclusion throughout TPL.

This report aligns with the structure of the MYAP, with initiatives grouped within the relevant accessibility standards and requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA: General Requirements, Information and Communications, Customer Service, Employment and the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

In 2023, TPL leveraged the work that began in 2022 by continuing to develop and deliver on the various initiatives identified in the MYAP.

Highlights of what we've accomplished so far:

- ✓ Published the 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report.

- ✓ Launched the Accessibility 101 Learning opportunity for staff, volunteers and third parties providing goods, services and facilities on behalf of TPL to the public.

- ✓ Updated TPL's Rules of Conduct to reflect legislated requirements for service animals.

- ✓ Established an inventory of technology and audio/visual equipment to provide live closed captioning for in-person programs, meetings and events organized by TPL.

A number of other initiatives are underway and outlined in this document. Although TPL made great strides in 2023 to develop and deliver on our MYAP initiatives, there is still much work to do. TPL is committed to advancing all of the MYAP initiatives by 2025.

status of initiatives

This section outlines all the MYAP initiatives undertaken by TPL's divisions in 2023 to meet our legislated requirements under the AODA. It includes work completed and work started as of December 31, 2023. The initiatives are grouped under the following sections:

- section 1: general requirements
- section 2: information and communication standards
- section 3: customer service standards
- section 4: employment standards
- section 5: design of public spaces standards

For ease of reference, the numbering of initiatives follows the numbering in the MYAP. Please note TPL has yet to advance any MYAP initiatives not found in this report.

section 1: general requirements

TPL is committed to serving the individual accessibility needs of our employees and customers with disabilities by updating organizational processes, expanding services and building staff competencies in this area. This year we made a number of key advances, including revising our corporate accessibility policy, publishing the 2022 MYAP Status Report, and launching a new organizational accessibility learning opportunity for our staff, volunteers and third parties providing goods, services and facilities on TPL's behalf to the public.

completed
5

9
initiatives

to be started
2

in progress
2

what we've done

Initiative #1.1

Revise TPL's Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities policy to reflect applicable amendments to legislated compliance requirements, and post it to our external website.

- Approved by the TPL Board of Directors on October 30, 2023 and posted on the Accessibility page of TPL's website.

Initiative 1.2:

Establish, deliver, and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- Approved by Directors' Committee in December 2021 and posted on the Accessibility page of TPL's website.

Initiative #1.3:

Develop and make available an annual status report on the progress of the implementation of the Library's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- Approved by TPL's Senior Leadership Team in February 2023, endorsed by TPL's Board of Directors in March 2023, and posted on the Accessibility page of TPL's website.

Initiative #1.4:

Incorporate accessibility criteria into all procurement proposals and contracts related to the acquisition of goods, services, products and facilities.

- Incorporated into the Request for Proposal documents for the Applicant Tracking System, Reserve a Computer, and the TD Summer Reading Club projects.

Initiative #1.7:

Establish, maintain, and track training on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities, and provide it to staff, volunteers, and third parties conducting business on behalf of the Library.

- Launched TPL's Accessibility 101 learning opportunity in January 2023 to staff and volunteers, and began tracking completion rates.
- Incorporated this learning opportunity into the Collaborative Program Agreement for external collaborators, performers and presenters.

what's in progress

Initiative #1.6:

Incorporate accessibility criteria into future procurement processes and documents related to the acquisition of self-serve kiosks.

- Continuing to incorporate accessibility requirements into procurement documents related to acquiring self-serve kiosks.

Initiative #1.9:

Create and provide all future newly designed or redeveloped training-related forms and materials as accessible digital documents.

- On an ongoing basis, converting Learning and Development documents into accessible digital documents, including learn:tpl submission forms, e-learning development forms, and instructional materials.

section 2: information and communication standards

TPL is committed to providing access to information and communications in an accessible and inclusive manner that meets an individual's needs, while building staff knowledge and capacity to support this work. In 2023, we continued our progress on a number of initiatives, including offering accessible digital document learning opportunities for staff, delivering accessible public outreach and engagement activities, providing accessible collections, and expanding public access to assistive hardware and software in our branches.

to be started 3
completed 3
17 initiatives
11 in progress

what we've done

Initiative #2.3:

Establish an organizational process for providing accessible formats and communication supports for staff and public meetings, programs and events upon request.

- Developed an update to TPL's process as part of the AODA Program, which will launch in 2024.
- Established an organizational inventory of technology and audio/visual equipment needed to provide in-person live closed captioning services.
- Developed a number of resources on implementing the updated process to support staff.

Initiative #2.4:

Provide continuous training to staff on creating accessible digital documents.

- Trained 120 staff on Creating Accessible Digital Documents; this is in addition to the 150+ staff who completed the training in 2022. This learning opportunity will continue to be offered to staff throughout 2024.

Initiative #2.13:

Establish a process to provide accessible formats of special collections, rare books and archives upon request.

- Implemented a process for TPL's Digitization and Reproduction Services to provide accessible formats of special collection materials upon request.

what's in progress

Initiative #2.1:

Continue to receive and respond to employee and customer feedback in a manner that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs.

- Continuing to receive and respond to feedback and inquiries from our staff and customers with disabilities through a variety of methods, including phone, email and TTY.
- To support this practice, we also:
  » Provide a dedicated service point through Accessibility Services to receive and respond to public feedback, support unique access needs, and help to identify and remove barriers.
  » Consider the individual's accessibility needs when responding to feedback and inquiries related to privacy, circulation services, or financial matters.
  » Provide surveys to staff following Town Halls and Ask Me Anything sessions in an accessible html format.

Initiative #2.2:

Establish guidelines and resources that support accessible virtual and in-person public consultation and engagement activities.

- Developing staff resources on accessible meetings for public consultation and engagement events organized by TPL.

Initiative #2.5:

Provide ongoing staff updates through TPL's internal channels to build awareness of the AODA Program and updates on our progress.

- Continuing to leverage all of TPL's internal channels to highlight for staff the importance of our AODA journey and to share progress. Communication activities this year included:
  » Recognizing Global Accessibility Awareness Day through the City Librarian's weekly message to staff, which also promoted the Creating Accessible Digital Documents learning opportunity.
  » Recognizing National AccessAbility Week through a message in the City Librarian's weekly message to staff.
  » Promoting the new Accessibility 101 learning opportunity to staff through TPL's internal communication channels.

Initiative #2.6:

Provide automated or live closed captioning for key public and staff meetings and events upon request.

- Establishing and implementing the technology, equipment and training required to support live closed captioning for in-branch programs, meetings and events upon request as part of TPL's updated process for providing accessible formats and communication supports.

- Continuing to receive and support customer requests for live closed captioning in online and in-person library programs.

- On an ongoing basis, continuing to provide live closed captioning for key internal and external events, including quarterly virtual staff town halls and Ask Me Anything sessions, and TPL Board meetings and key public programs.

- Continuing to post written transcripts and replays on internal and external websites, as appropriate.

Initiative #2.7:

Review and update public and staff emergency and evacuation procedures to ensure they include provisions for persons with disabilities, and provide this information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request.

- Completing updates to all divisional Business Continuity Plan procedures and documents, including applying accessible formatting and adding provisions for persons with disabilities.

Initiative #2.8:

Establish digital accessibility guidelines for the design and maintenance of the Library's websites, web content and web-based applications.

- On an ongoing basis, continuing to review TPL's public-facing websites, including tpl.ca and tpl.ca/kids, for accessibility; an accessibility guideline list is provided as a link in the footer of each web page and available on the Accessibility page of TPL's website.

- Continuing to review and update content posted to TPL's website to ensure compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA requirements.

- Continuing to remediate the issues identified through a digital accessibility audit conducted by Accessibility Partners. This work will continue throughout 2024.

Initiative #2.9:

Establish a process for conducting accessibility evaluations and user testing of the Library's websites, web content and web-based applications that include persons with disabilities.

- Conducting user acceptance testing in consultation with the Manager, Accessibility, on any websites, web content or web-based applications associated with an organizational technology-related project.

Initiative #2.10:

Establish a process for ensuring the accessibility-related information on the Library's website is updated on a regular basis.

- On an ongoing basis, continuing to update web pages to reflect current accessibility-related information and service developments. A recent update included adding a new information page on the revised Talking Books Status.

Initiative #2.11:

Continue to provide information related to accessible collections on the Library's website.

- Continuing to update TPL's website with a full description of the Library's accessible collections, including but not limited to large print books, dyslexia-friendly readers, and the IBBY collection for young people with disabilities.
- Creating and coordinating book lists and blog posts that highlight topics on accessible collections, disability and Deaf culture, and accessibility initiatives across TPL and the broader community.
- Promoting Home Library Service collections, including talking books.

Initiative #2.12:

Continue to work with, and promote, the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to provide accessible library collections and services to persons with print disabilities.

- Continuing to collaborate with CELA and partner at community outreach events. In 2023, that included:
  » presenting to the Learning and Assistive Technology Team at Toronto Metropolitan University.
  » participating in the BALANCE for Blind Adults Community Information Fair.
  » exhibiting at the CNIB Connecting the Dots Conference.
- Continuing to coordinate CELA webinars for TPL staff.
- Maintaining a collection of CELA materials, which are promoted on the library's Accessible Collections webpage.
- Continuing to assist library customers with print disabilities with registering for CELA.

Initiative #2.17:

Establish a process for identifying, providing, maintaining and supporting the use of assistive hardware and software that meets the information and communication needs of employees and customers with disabilities.

- Continuing to make assistive hardware and software available to customers with disabilities in branches, including the Adaptive Technology Hub at the Toronto Reference Library and North York Central Library branches.
- Advancing a number of technology-related projects to promote digital accessibility, including:
  » making magnification software, large print keyboards and track balls available in all Learning Centres and Digital Innovation Hubs, as part of the Public Computing Realignment and Replacement project. Large print keyboards and track balls are also available in children's areas across TPL. Public computers provide screen reading software, an accessible reading app, Ease of Access settings, and browser extensions for accessibility.
  » incorporating accessibility requirements into all enterprise projects, to ensure any applications and technologies TPL acquires comply with WCAG requirements.
  » continuing to address staff accessibility needs for hardware and software as part of the Staff Computing Project, which is currently in the planning and analysis phase.

section 3: customer service standards

TPL is committed to offering equitable access to our services, programs and spaces that uphold the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for our customers with disabilities. In 2023, we updated our Rules of Conduct to support legislated requirements, and continued updating our programming policies and procedures to reflect our support of service animals and support persons in our branches.

completed
3

9
initiatives

3
to be started

3
in progress

what we've done

Initiative #3.1:

Incorporate the requirements under the Accessible Customer Service Standards into the Library's revised Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy.

- Incorporated these requirements into TPL's revised Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy; the revised policy can be found on the Accessibility page of TPL's website.

Initiative #3.2:

Incorporate the Library's Accessibility Statement of Commitment into any revised or newly developed policies and procedures related to customer service.

- Included the commitment statement in key documents, including the updated Service Delivery Model document that describes TPL's approach to providing services, and TPL's Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy.
- Continuing to ensure the statement is taken into consideration when any revised or newly developed policies and procedures are established, and that it's easily discoverable and understood by staff and customers.

Initiative #3.3:

Update the Library's Rules of Conduct to reflect current legislated requirements for service animals.

- Updated the Rules of Conduct Bulletin 17 in January 2023 to include current legislated requirements regarding service animals.
- Developed resources, including tip sheets, to support these updates and provide guidance to staff in situations related to service animals.

what's in progress

Initiative #3.5:

Establish, maintain, and track staff training resources and opportunities on welcoming service animals and support persons within the Library's branches, facilities, and Book Mobile vehicles.

- Continuing to work on establishing the Welcoming Service Animals training project for all staff, which is expected to launch in 2024. The aim of this project is to equip staff with the knowledge and confidence to welcome service animals within the Library's branches, facilities, and Book Mobile vehicles.

Initiative #3.6

Integrate information about welcoming service animals and support persons into any revised or newly developed programming policies, procedures, and/or strategies.

- Updating the Collaborative Program Agreement template to include training for collaborators on service requirements for persons with disabilities, including those requiring support persons and service animals.
- Continuing to incorporate these requirements in all policies, procedures and strategies where relevant and applicable.

Initiative #3.9:

Incorporate accessibility best practices into any future communication plans related to service disruptions and long-term branch closures.

- Continuing to ensure that our messaging and deliverables reflect accessibility best practices, and that relevant information is easily accessible through website, phone and email notifications.

section 4: employment standards

TPL is committed to fostering a welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible work environment for our employees with disabilities. We're continuing to build on our work in this area by enhancing our recruitment and hiring processes and work programs, and continuing to provide accessible formats and communication supports to employees with disabilities as part of our performance management and career development practices.

in progress

8

16
initiatives

8

to be started

what's in progress

Initiative 4.1.

Establish accessible recruitment and interviewing guidelines and continuous training for hiring managers, including the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for candidates with disabilities upon request.

- Continuing to develop learning opportunities for hiring managers and staff as part of the Applicant Tracking System on how to navigate the recruitment process.

Initiative #4.2:

Continue to provide any requested assistive technology/equipment as part of the hiring process, in consultation with the candidate.

- On an ongoing basis, hiring managers and the recruitment team, in collaboration with the candidate, are working to accommodate the individual's accessibility needs, including any required assistive technology upon request throughout the hiring process.

Initiative #4.3:

Establish a process for informing successful candidates that workplace accessibility accommodations are available upon request, including the process for submitting a request.

- Continuing to provide a copy of TPL's Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy as part of the Library's Offer of Employment package; the policy informs new employees of the availability of workplace accessibility accommodations, such as accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

- Creating an accommodation-related email and adding a clause in all job postings to ensure candidates have a channel to submit requests.

- Introducing a new Applicant Tracking System in 2024, which allows candidates to create a comprehensive profile, including the option to identify any specific accommodation requests.

Initiative #4.6:

Provide all newly developed and revised Human Resources-related forms in accessible digital formats.

- Creating a central folder for staff to store electronic HR forms.
- Continuing to develop an inventory of all HR's digital forms and create an action plan to ensure they are accessible.

Initiative #4.7:

Include a notice in all new and redeveloped HR documents about the availability of accessible formats upon request.

- Incorporating TPL's accessibility statement into all Human Resources-related documents to inform staff of the availability of accessible formats upon request.

Initiative #4.11:

Update all Modified Work Program documents and processes to reflect current and appropriate language and terminology.

- Continuing to review and update existing forms for the Modified Work Program on an ongoing basis.
- Identifying any required changes to the Joint Modified Work Program and initiating discussions with union representatives.

Initiative #4.12:

Update the Library's process for developing and documenting individualized accommodation plans that include consultation with the employee, their supervisor, and union representation if applicable.

- Identifying and implementing legislatively-required changes to the process for developing individualized accommodation plans and initiating discussions with union representatives.

Initiative #4.16:

Continue to ensure that any position or location changes impacting employees with disabilities take into account any documented individualized accommodation plans.

- Working with employees and their supervisors on an ongoing basis to ensure the appropriate accessibility accommodations are in place for their new position and/or location.

section 5: design of public spaces standards

TPL is committed to providing open, welcoming, accessible and inclusive spaces for our employees and customers. We're continuing to incorporate accessibility requirements into the design and development of our capital projects to ensure our employees and customers with disabilities can safely and independently enter and navigate our branches and facilities.

in progress
7
13
initiatives
6
to be started

what's in progress

Initiative #5.1:

Incorporate the technical requirements established under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated exterior paths of travel, including, but not limited to, stairs, ramps, sidewalks and walkways.

- On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into newly constructed and redeveloped capital projects.

Initiative #5.4:

Continue to incorporate the requirements established under the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines into the planning and design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects.

- Incorporating these requirements into the design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects on an ongoing basis. In 2023, this work included redevelopment projects at Locke, Pleasant View, and Centennial branches, as well as the Youth Hub at North York Central Library and the forthcoming first floor redevelopment at the Toronto Reference Library.

Initiative #5.5:

Incorporate the requirements established under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards into the design and construction of any future on and off-street accessible library parking.

- Continuing to include these requirements into the State of Good Repair Grounds Program that details AODA compliance for parking lots, egress/ingress paths, and emergency exit paths from buildings.

Initiative #5.7:

Incorporate the technical requirements established under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated service counters and signage.

- Continuing to incorporate these requirements into the design of service counters and signage as part of any newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects on an ongoing basis, and into building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

Initiative #5.9:

Incorporate the technical requirements into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated fixed queuing guides.

- Continuing to incorporate these requirements on an ongoing basis, including into building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

Initiative #5.11:

Incorporate the technical requirements into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated waiting areas with fixed seating.

- Continuing to incorporate these requirements on an ongoing basis, including into building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

Initiative #5.13:

Establish procedures for the ongoing maintenance of the accessibility elements of the Library's branches and public spaces.

- Continuing to log maintenance requests through TPL's internal process to ensure the ongoing maintenance of exterior accessibility elements of TPL's branches and facilities.

conclusion and contact

In 2023, TPL continued our multi-year journey by working together to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers within our programs, services, digital and physical spaces, and employment opportunities. As we continue to build on the many initiatives mentioned in this report, TPL is continuing to focus on accessibility by ensuring it is a responsibility shared by all staff across the organization.

contact

For questions about TPL's 2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report, contact:

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