



IELA – Service levels at Canadian public libraries for people with print disabilities

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Our Vision is that anyone with a print disability can join their local public library and access or obtain materials in an alternative format that is appropriate for their needs

Public Libraries will benefit from:

- Provincial / Federal funding to participate in IELA
- The support of a National Resource Centre that provides services as described in *Opening the Book* and resulting from future IELA consultations with the public library community
- Network capabilities for access to remote resources
- A mix of restricted materials (produced under the Canadian *Copyright Act* s.32) for persons with print disabilities in addition to range of accessible commercial and non-commercial materials
- Marketing and promotional support to raise awareness to both the print-disabled and print-abled communities regarding accessible library services
- Continuous review of new technologies, service and materials options to improve / enhance accessible services in public libraries

In addition:

- Understanding levels of service and capabilities is an essential first step in putting a cost on equitable service delivery
- Service delivery needs to be related to standards and guidelines on matters such as national resource sharing, client self identification, inter-provincial recognition of service levels
- Public libraries can use service level guidelines as a basic model for service and determine how and what to implement based on the funding and administrative structure in their city / province.

Services

- Ideally, all customers can register with their public library for access to accessible services through self declaration of print disability, rather than required authorization by doctor or other health professional.
- Additional public library membership privileges to meet the diverse needs of customers with print disabilities, including:
 - Options for extended loan periods, no fines
 - Access to adaptive technology
 - Access to digital repositories of materials in alternate formats
- Extension of public library services into the community to meet the needs of customers who may not be able to visit the library themselves:
 - Homebound Readers Service – mobile library, books by mail,
 - Deposits to retirement homes / institutions
- Staff training support for all public library staff:
 - Awareness (everyone)
 - Specialized service delivery (selected staff)
 - Technology expertise
- InterLibrary Loans between provinces / libraries for alternate formats
- Programs, information and reference services that are accessible to people with print and other disabilities
- Outreach programs for marketing / promotion of public library accessible services

Materials in alternate formats

- Public libraries offer access to titles in alternate formats, including:
 - Large Print
 - Audio and Digital audio books
 - Accessible online resources (e-text, e-braille, digital audio, web sites, etc);
 - Descriptive video
 - Direct link to digital repositories for all types of alternate formats
- *Note:*
 - Public libraries offer a mix of restricted (produced under the Canadian *Copyright Act* s.32) and unrestricted / commercial collections of materials in alternate formats
 - Public libraries often collaborate within regions / provinces to provide more comprehensive access to materials in alternate formats

Delivery methods

- Materials available at any facility or delivered to customer by appropriate method (e.g. homebound delivery, free mail, etc.)
 - Delivery service for central collections to be accessible at neighborhood branch
 - While free postage program does not currently include print disabilities, public libraries can mail directly to legally blind customers
 - Customer access to direct download from home; online streaming to personal computer
- Internet enabled devices via high speed wireless network
- Support for access to materials in alternate formats for customers who may not have the equipment or resources to access them from home. Possibilities include:
 - Download station at library for downloading online material directly to customer device (CD, USB key; iPOD and MP3 players, etc)
 - Creation of CD copy at the library

Assistive technologies

- Adaptive workstations, assistive devices or accessible software on public computers. Could include:
 - Screen reader
 - Speech recognition
 - Magnification
 - Literacy support
 - Braille translation
 - Alternate keyboards
 - Alternate mice
 - Scanners
 - Movable furniture
 - Large screen monitors
 - Head mouse and onscreen keyboard
 - refreshable braille
 - Braille embosser – either for client use or at centres with the capability to process e-braille
- Equipment to access materials in alternate formats for customer loan (i.e. CD / MP3 players; DAISY readers)
- Programs to support customer use of assistive technologies. Possibilities include:
 - Staff-led orientations
 - Volunteer-led orientations
 - In-home computer assistance
 - Online training and support

For further information on models for accessible library services see:

“Funding and Governance of Library and Information Services for Visually Impaired People: International Case Studies”. IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section by Rightscom LTD. May 2007.

<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s31/index.htm#Publications>