

Halifax Public Libraries Universal Access Plan 2014-2016

Project Team

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“Instead of saying that people don’t have the skills to be part of our organization, we should be asking ourselves why our organization doesn’t have the skills to include them.”

A Community –Led Process

What We've Heard- Priority Needs

- **Employment opportunities**
- **Supportive, safe spaces for groups to meet**
- **Technology access**
- **Inclusion, but also recognition of special needs**
- **Opportunities for people of all abilities to intersect**
- **Recognition of distinct community cultures**
- **Recognition that some disabilities are “invisible”**
- **Library staff who are able to interact effectively with all groups of customers**
- **The dispelling of fear and growth of understanding**
- **Specific assistive technology needs**

Our Objectives

- **Expand staff competencies and organizational capacity to ensure a positive library experience for all customers, regardless of ability**
- **Develop a more inclusive workplace by identifying and reducing barriers to employment and volunteer positions within the library**
- **Work with branches, regional teams, departments and community to create universally accessible programs, collections, services and facilities, as well as those designed to meet specific needs.**

Our Objectives

- **Through community engagement, develop sustained relationships that will enable us to co-create relevant and responsive library services for people with disabilities**

Key Actions

Year One: 2014-2015

- **Develop staff training plan based on identified needs**
- **Based on Sackville pilot, develop proposed model for provision of work placements for persons with intellectual disabilities**
- **Develop recommendations on making our hiring practices more accessible for persons with disabilities**
- **Support implementation of any initiatives regarding access to digital collections for the print-disabled.**

Key Actions

Year One: 2014-2015

- **Continue community consultations begun in 2013-2014 and develop plan to engage branch staff in local consultations and outreach events as appropriate**
- **Research best practices in assistive technology for public PCs, tablets, website etc. and make recommendations**

Key Actions

Year Two: 2015-2016

- Roll out Phase One of training plan
- Pilot new work placement model in selected branches and evaluate
- Research best practices and develop recommendations for more accessible branch signage and way finding
- Work with Youth Services team to develop a model for integrated, accessible pre-school programming
- Work with Adult programming team to develop a plan to increase accessibility of adult programs (signing etc.)
- Investigate feasibility of creating a community advisory committee

Questions?