ECRL Operational Accessibility Plan 2024-2025

Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL) is a member of the Interregional Advisory Committee for Library Accessibility (IACLA). This committee provides advice to the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL), Cape Breton Regional Library (CBRL), Colchester East Hants Public Library (CEHPL), Cumberland Public Libraries (CPL), Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL), and Western Counties Regional Library (WCRL) on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. At least one half of the members of the advisory committee have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the participating regional libraries become accessible, in compliance with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017).

IACLA produces an annual activity report which is posted on the ECRL website for public reference. This report outlines the commitments ECRL has made too improving the accessibility of public library services. The ECRL Operational Accessibility Plan for **2024-2025** outlines specifics actions ECRL will undertake to help achieve those commitments.

Areas for action outlined by the IACLA report and ECRL's goals include:

Collections

☐ **Include a budget line item with a spending target** for accessible collections, works by persons with disabilities, or resources for persons with disabilities, in the 2024-2025 budget. At minimum a $1000.

☐ **A community engagement campaign** will be conducted using both online and offline means to solicit input about the collection. The focus of the campaign will be to gather feedback about how well the collection meets accessibility related needs and suggestions for improvement. As well solicit suggestions for purchases with an emphasis on Nova Scotian authors.

Online

☐ Create anonymous survey for public feedback related to accessibility

☐ Social media campaign re: feedback and sharing ideas

☐ Accessible reading list featuring local authors

Offline

☐ Anonymous comment boxes at every location for feedback

☐ Community engagement sessions at each branch for in-person feedback

☐ Traditional marketing (posters, word of mouth)

☐ **Staff will be surveyed about their experience** of how well the collection is meeting accessibility related needs.

☐ **Management staff will research authors with disabilities**, and resources for persons with disabilities to support material selection and purchasing.

Employment

☐ **All staff to receive at least one targeted professional development or training course** to improve their skills and knowledge of accessibility related services.

☐ **ECRL management** to investigate and advocate for the creation of a **management position** which includes accessibility as one of the major areas of responsibility.

Information and Communication

☐ **Establish relationships** with all Municipal unit's accessibility committees.

☐ Research committee members & appropriate contacts for each region (Inverness, Richmond, Guysborough, St. Mary's, Port Hawkesbury)

☐ Establish line of communication – what is reasonable? Determine goals, scope & expectations

☐ **Establish procedures** for how requests for information and communications in accessible formats will be dealt with.

☐ **Conduct an accessibility audit** of the library website to assess gaps and plan future website development.

☐ Get quote from Accessible Canada (website recommended by Erin Comeau)

☐ Once report is received, determine implementation plan & timeline

☐ **Investigate and research communications accommodations** (sign language interpreters and technologies) to develop a plan for future offerings.

☐ **Document procedures for accessible communications** in print and online promotion for ECRL

☐ **Develop and produce captioned video** for key ECRL services (registering for a new card, exploring the catalogue, etc.)

☐ Go beyond raising awareness of accessibility by **fostering a culture of accessibility** within the organization (accessibility at the core of decisions and priorities rather than an add-on activity)

Programs and Services

☐ Ensure **staff are trained on accessibility features** of all digital services.

☐ Draft memo – get input then send to staff by Wednesday Jan 31.

☐ Send out training document & draft release for April 01

☐ All branch staff to hold a **brainstorming discussion** about how to increase the general accessibility of programming.

☐ Determine guiding questions for branch staff & share – timeline Fall 2024

Built Environment

☐ Management staff to work on **funding and implementing a new accessibility ramp** solution at ECRL's regional office.

☐ **Advocate for the Municipality of the County of Inverness to install outdoor directional signage** at the Chéticamp Public Library and an accessible door.