



LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The North Lake County Public Library District (the “Library”) welcomes individuals with disabilities and strives to provide equal access to the Library facility, activities, and programs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet its requirements. North Lake County Public Library District does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to employment, Library programs or services. The Employee Handbook addresses employment and ADA compliance.

In accordance with the ADA, the Library will take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. The process of obtaining accommodations is interactive. By law, a customer is not required to identify themselves as having a disability, unless requesting accommodations from the Library. It is the responsibility of the customer to initiate the process by self-disclosing as an individual with a disability to the staff and requesting reasonable accommodation. The Library will make reasonable accommodations in Library policies, practices and procedures when necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless a fundamental alteration in a Library program would result; and operate its services, programs and activities so that, when viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

The Library Director, or designee, is the Library’s ADA compliance coordinator. Implementing this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Method of notification

A copy of this policy shall be included with the Library’s other policies and shall also be posted on the Library’s website. If a person with visual impairment or other disability inquires about this policy or about the Library’s ADA services, staff shall offer to read the policy and to provide appropriate ADA services.

Programming

The following notice will be posted on the Library’s website and the Library’s information bulletin board:

Any person who wishes to make an accommodation request for a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to access Library meetings, services, programs, or activities may file a written statement with the ADA compliance coordinator no fewer than five (5) working days prior to the event. Upon request, the Library will provide alternate means for filing a request, such as a personal interview, tape or digital recording, to a person with a disability.

Building

In 2019, an assessment for accessibility was performed. The building needs major renovation to fully comply with the ADA. North Lake County Public Library completed a pre-funding phase

with a licensed architect in 2019 and is working with the North Lake County Library Foundation in exploring a capital campaign to raise the needed funds to renovate the building. Visitors with physical disabilities may find access to and within the building challenging. Therefore, in an effort to ensure that Library customers with disabilities have access to Library services, programs and activities the Library offers a variety of services and devices. A complete list is posted on the Library's website and is available from the Circulation Desk.

Accommodations to persons with a disability

All Library staff are available to provide reasonable ADA assistance and to assist a customer in the communication of an ADA request, if needed. Staff will assist a customer with a disability in any safe and feasible way needed, including opening doors, carrying or retrieving Library materials, completing Library forms, reading or writing out questions or instructions. Staff assistance with accommodation assistance will be made in a reasonable time pending staff coverage.

Despite the Library's best efforts, not all Library materials may be available in accessible formats and not every Library program, service and activity can be made accessible to every disabled person without fundamentally altering the nature of the service, activity or program. However, the Library does make every reasonable effort to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities upon written request. The Library will provide alternate means for filing a request to a person with a disability, upon request.

Services of a personal nature are not considered reasonable accommodations and are not provided by the Library. Examples of personal services include but are not limited to tutoring, attendant care, transportation, wheelchairs, hearing aids, prescription eyeglasses and alternate format material unrelated to interlibrary loan.

Meeting room users

Groups using the meeting rooms and presenters are expected to meet the requirements of the ADA. The Library offers the facility as a service to the community, but has no responsibility for the groups using the room.

Service animals

No animals except service dogs or miniature horses and service dogs or miniature horses in training are allowed in the Library building. The Director or designee may make exceptions allowing animals other than service animals in the Library, dependent upon circumstances (i.e. for a Library program). The use of service animals is acceptable at the Library as long as they meet the Service Animal definition stated in the ADA.

A service dog or miniature horse is one that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Service animals do not include emotional support or therapy dogs or miniature horses, or other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained.

The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices, then the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

The service animal may be asked to leave the Library if:

1. The animal is not under the control of its handler, and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it; or
2. The animal is not housebroken.

In such cases, the handler must be given the opportunity to participate in any service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises. The handler is liable for any damage done to the premises by the service animal.

A public notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place that the Library does not allow animals other than service animals and reserves the right to file complaints alleging the misrepresentation of service animals.

A representative of the Library who suspects that an animal is being misrepresented as a service animal to gain entry may file a complaint with local law enforcement (MCA § 49-4-221). The complaint must be written and must state the particulars of the alleged misrepresentation.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, or an animal is not identified, staff will ask the following questions:

1. Is the dog or miniature horse a service animal required because of a disability, and
2. What work or task has the dog or miniature horse been trained to perform?

Grievance Procedure

Persons who believe they have been discriminated against based on their disability should file a complaint with the Library Director. An ADA complaint should be submitted to the Library Director in writing and should contain information about the alleged discrimination, including the name, address and telephone number of the individual filing the claim, and also the location, date and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or an audio recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request. The ADA complaint should be submitted to the Library Director as soon as possible, but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged ADA violation.

Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the Library Director or designee will meet with the individual to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions; and within 15 calendar days after such meeting, the Library Director or designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the individual, such as large print or audio recording. The response will explain the position of the Library and offer options for possible resolution of the complaint.

If the response of the Library Director or designee does not satisfy the individual who filed the complaint, that individual may appeal the decision to the Library Board of Trustees within 15 calendar days after the individual's receipt of the response. Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Library Trustees, the Library Director or designee will meet with the

individual to discuss the problem and possible resolutions, and within 15 calendar days after the meeting will respond in writing and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the individual, with a possible final resolution of the problem.

The Library welcomes input from persons with disabilities about ways the Library can more completely serve them, and every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

This policy was approved by the North Lake County Public Library District Board of Trustees on February 27, 2020.

Signed:

Allen Bone, Board Chairman
Abbi Dooley, Library Director
02-27-2020