

# INFORMATION BRIEF

## Equitable Access to Public Library Service for People Who Have a Print Disability

### ACCESSIBILITY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

#### THE ISSUE:

**More than 3 million Canadians** cannot read regular print due to vision loss, a learning disability, or a physical disability.

**More than 90% of books and information published today are not available in an accessible format (e.g. Braille, e-audio, e-text) and only a small fraction of that is Canadian content.**

#### THE CURRENT CONTEXT: ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY SERVICES

Libraries have a desire and a legal responsibility to provide accessible library services to everyone in their communities, which includes:

- a robust selection of books and information resources produced in accessible formats; and
- training opportunities for library staff in the provision of accessible services.

In Ontario, the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) provides books and other accessible resources in French and English to public libraries and offers a borrowing service to schools for students who have a print-disability. CELA centralizes acquisitions, support and training, and partners with the major producers of accessible materials. This model lowers costs per library system by significantly reducing duplication of effort across Ontario (and Canada) and enables people with print disabilities to have local access to an equitable and accessible library service.

Ontario's libraries find this to be the most streamlined and cost-effective model to provide a quality, accessible library service experience for people who have a print disability in their communities.

This model requires sustained funding at the provincial level to provide equity of service for all Ontarians who have a print disability.

#### MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRINT-DISABILITIES

A print disability is a learning, physical or visual disability that prevents a person from reading conventional print.

Of the 3 million Canadians who have a print disability:

- 27% have a learning disability: An impairment relating to comprehension
- 40% have a physical disability: The inability to hold or manipulate a book

# Equitable Access to Public Library Service for People Who Have a Print Disability

- 33 % have a visual disability: Severe or total impairment of sight or the inability to focus or move one's eyes

## **MORE INFORMATION** **EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE A PRINT DISABILITY**

From Kindergarten to post-secondary learning, students who have a print disability are provided with educational resources in accessible formats through their educational institution and from Alternative Education Resources Ontario (AERO), which is a service of the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

## **MORE INFORMATION** **ABOUT ACCESSIBLE FORMAT MATERIALS**

**Audio:** DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) – a digital audio book format that can be read in a similar way to reading a print book. The audio file is prepared in a way to permit, for example, navigating by sections, using bookmarks, and accessing the index. DAISY can include both audio and text. Audio can be narrated or in synthetic voice (generated by a computer).

**E-text:** Books, newspapers and magazines created in electronic text (e-text). E-text materials may be read using adaptive technologies such as a screen reader or magnifier, the text-to-speech feature on a mobile device, or a refreshable braille display.

**Braille:** Books and magazines in contracted and uncontracted braille, and electronic braille (e-braille) - including books in Unified English Braille (UEB). E-braille is accessed on a refreshable braille display device. Other materials include Braille music scores, including classical and popular music and preparatory materials for Royal Conservatory of Music examinations.

**Printbraille:** Regular children's picture books with see-through braille sheets added. Perfect both for those learning to read braille and for adult braille readers who want to read to children.

**Described movies:** Films with a special audio track that describes settings and actions during pauses in the dialogue.

**Limitations on commercially available electronic formats:** Commercially available audiobook, ebook and online content may be accessible but often have limitations. Users may not be able to search content, place extensive bookmarks, precisely navigate line by line, or regulate the speaking speed without distortion.

PREPARED BY MEMBERS OF THE ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Modified October 2016.

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