NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Subject: **Assistive Technology**
Effective: December 2012
Revised: *July 2021*

1.0   PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the minimum standards for providing assistive technologies in NB public libraries for people with print disabilities.

2.0   APPLICATION

This policy applies to those who purchase assistive technologies for NB public libraries.

3.0   DEFINITIONS

Assistive technology refers to any piece of computer/technical equipment that eliminates or diminishes barriers to information and maximizes independence.

Adaptive workstation refers to a desk with a computer, peripherals and software that allows a person to access the content of printed or electronic information through such functions as enlarging standard print; converting text-to-speech; highlighting and reading aloud electronic text; and operating a computer through keystrokes and verbal computer feedback.

Print disability refers to a condition that prevents people from reading standard print due to severe or total impairment of sight or the inability to focus or move one's eyes; the inability to hold or manipulate a book; or an impairment relating to comprehension.

Public library refers to a public or public-school library within New Brunswick public library system.

4.0   LEGAL AUTHORITY

New Brunswick Public Libraries Act

5.0   GOALS / PRINCIPLES

New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) provides public access to assistive technologies in libraries to facilitate life-long learning and to provide services and resources to help meet the information, educational, cultural and recreational needs of New Brunswickers.

The goal of NBPLS is to provide more equitable library access by reducing the barriers that stand between patrons with print disabilities and the vast amount of information available through public libraries.

6.0   REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

6.1 PROVISION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Library Managers/Directors will work with municipalities and other sources of funding to increase the availability of assistive technologies in libraries based on community need.

NBPLS will consult organizations that serve people with print disabilities to determine the most appropriate assistive technologies based on user needs and available library funds.

Based on consultations with organizations that serve people with print disabilities and best practices established by other public library jurisdictions, the technologies listed below will be made available in NB public libraries based on available funding. The technologies listed below will be provide a **standard and basic level of accessibility to a person with a print disability**. The equipment/technologies can be purchased over a period of time based on available funds and the most pressing community need:

Equipment:
– A wheelchair accessible desk with height adjustment
– A Closed Circuit Television unit (CCTV) that allows a user to enlarge print or images by placing them on a tray, which is positioned under a camera
– DAISY player – a device that allows a user to play DAISY books and other audio formats
– Headphones

Hardware:
– A desk top computer with CD burner
– A monitor that is at least 26 inches in size
– A document scanner
– A printer (if not connected to a nearby printer)
– Large Print French keyboard--yellow with black lettering
– Large Print English keyboard--yellow with black lettering
– A roller trackball mouse
– A regular mouse

Software:
- System Access and NVDA - A program that allows the user to interact with the computer through keystrokes and receive audible responses.
- OpenBook - A program that allows users to scan print documents and read or hear them read on the computer.
- Windows - Magnifier - A program that magnifies text.
- Windows – Narrator – Software that can read dialog boxes and window controls in most of the basic applications for Windows.
- AMIS DAISY reader - a software program that allows users to listen to DAISY books.
- Windows – Speech Recognition – a software program that allows the user to interact with the computer using their voice.
- Word Q – Software that allows accessible reading of PDF documents, word prediction, speech feedback, speech recognition and proofreading.
- Other assistive technologies may be provided in public libraries with the approval of the Provincial Librarian (Executive Director). Free assistive technology software programs may be installed based on community demand and following the appropriate approval (see 6.5 of this policy). When approved, the software will become part of the standard configuration. However, free assistive technology software programs will not replace the purchase of the above mentioned software.
- Priority will be given to software programs that provide a bilingual interface (English and French).

6.3   USE AND LOCATION

The disclosure of a print disability will not be required to use an adaptive workstation or equipment such as a CCTV.

Adaptive workstations and equipment (e.g. CCTV) will be made available to any patron in the library based on a first-come-first-serve basis with time limits for usage as offered on other computers/equipment in the library.

Whenever possible, adaptive workstations will be located with or in close proximity to the public access workstations in the library.

6.4   CONFIGURATION

The standard configuration for an adaptive workstation will be consistent with the configuration outlined for public Internet computers in NBPLS Policy 1093 – Computers in Libraries (Appendix A) and 6.1 of this policy.

All software will be installed by the Technical Support Analyst (TSA). This includes any software obtained via the Internet.

6.5   PURCHASING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Requests to purchase or install assistive technologies will be made by the Library Manager/Director in coordination with the Technical Support Analyst (TSA) and approval of the Regional Director, Network and IT Support Manager and Provincial Librarian (Executive Director).

Funding requests for assistive technologies for use by the public will be made as part of the annual municipal budget planning process.

6.6   TRAINING, SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

In keeping with NBPLS Policy 1093 – Computers in Libraries:

- NBPLS employees will receive a general computer orientation session to introduce them to the assistive technologies. The Library Manager/Director will arrange the session with the Regional Public Services Librarian and/or TSA, and group sessions will be arranged whenever possible. Where feasible, orientation sessions for the staff and public will be given by an outside organization.

- Requests for staff computer related training are to be made to the Library Manager/Director (training needs may also be identified by the Library Manager/Director).

- Assistive technologies made available in public libraries will become part of the NBPLS IT support infrastructure with the TSA responsible for regular maintenance and software upgrades. The assistive technologies will be part of the NBPLS "evergreening" plan once purchased.

7.0   GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

8.0   REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

In consultation with the Provincial Office, Regional Directors may develop additional guidelines and procedures consistent with and necessary to support this policy.

9.0   REFERENCES

New Brunswick Public Libraries Act. (http://laws.gnb.ca/).

New Brunswick Public Library Service. Policy 1093 – Computers in Libraries.

10.0   CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

NBPLS Provincial Office, (506) 453-2354