

Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Type:

Standing Advisory Committee

Chair:

Community Engagement Coordinator

Ex Officio:

Director of Human Resources

Responsible to:

Chief Executive Officer

Purpose:

1. The Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee (the Committee) of the Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) works collaboratively to share their experience and assessments to improve ORL accessibility and inclusion. They focus on these principles:
 - Inclusion
 - Adaptability
 - Diversity
 - Collaboration
 - Self-determination
 - Universal design
2. The Committee will provide advice to the ORL Management Team on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in the services, programming, spaces, and collections of the ORL. Such as:
 - Raising awareness about accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities
 - Setting internal accessibility standards
 - Increasing accessibility within the ORL

- Providing support, information, and education related to accessibility and inclusion
 - Encouraging feedback about accessibility issues
3. People with disabilities will be an active part of this work.

Scope:

1. The committee is a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills which enrich the knowledge and skills of library staff and the library board.
2. Members of the committee provide feedback, observations, insights, and recommendations.

Authority:

1. The Committee reports to the Director of Public Services, who sits on the Committee as an ex-officio member. Ultimate decision-making lies with the Okanagan Regional Library's CEO.
2. The committee does not have formal authority to govern the organization, that is, the committee cannot issue directives which must be followed. The committee is not responsible for actioning identified deliverables and does not hold operational oversight over recommendations.

Membership:

1. The Committee will include 11 members, as follows:
 - a. Director of Public Services, Programming and Partnerships (ORL) – Ex officio
 - b. Administrative & Purchasing Assistant (ORL) – Recording Secretary
 - c. Community Engagement Coordinator (ORL)
 - d. Library Access Assistant (ORL)
 - e. Frontline staff member (ORL) (2)
 - f. Community members representing a range of disabilities and communities (5)

Member Expectations

1. Committee members should be familiar with the Committee's roles and responsibilities.
2. Committee members should raise any accessibility and inclusion-related concerns, which they have experienced, observed, or which have been brought to their attention by community members.
3. Appointed community members are asked to attend a minimum of fifty per cent of scheduled meetings. Interested community members that are not able to attend a minimum of fifty per cent of scheduled meetings will not be appointed to the committee.
4. Appointed community members must RSVP to the Administrative & Purchasing Assistant.
5. Committee members should thoroughly familiarize themselves with all agenda materials in preparation for active participation in discussions.

6. Committee members are not permitted to speak to the media as representatives of the Committee or the ORL.

Community Member Appointments

1. Community member vacancies will be advertised by the ORL and interested individuals will submit applications to the ORL.
2. The ORL will review the applications and select the community representatives. Community members will be selected based on their qualifications and experience pertaining to disability. The selection process also seeks to make the committee reflect the diversity of the ORL service area.
3. All members must be 16+ years old, or younger if accompanied by an adult.
4. All members must make a commitment for the whole cycle of the committee work, up to a one-year term. Members may participate in a 2nd term.

Role And Responsibilities

1. The Committee's roles and responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. Work collaboratively to identify and recommend initiatives to enhance accessibility and inclusion across the ORL.
 - b. Provide the ORL guidance and advice regarding accessibility within its services, programs, spaces, and collections, including how the ORL may become more inclusive in its operations.
 - c. Provide an objective view in the public interest and fairly represent this view at meetings.
 - d. Recognize that the Committee's comments and recommendations represent one of a series of decision-making processes that enable members of the ORL management team to fully understand the issues under review, including policy, budget, and services.
 - e. Receive public feedback gathered by ORL staff for review and recommendations for the prioritization of the responses.

Meetings:

Decision Making

1. This committee strives to reach decisions through consensus. Where no consensus, multiple recommendations can be forwarded to the ORL Management Team.

Meetings

1. Four committee meetings are scheduled per year in March, June, September, and December.
2. Special meetings will be scheduled as required.
3. To account for the large geographic nature of the Committee, meetings will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

4. Accessibility features will be used in Microsoft Teams including meeting recordings, transcripts, and captioning.
5. Meeting minutes and recommendations of the Committee will be provided to the ORL management team.

Reporting

Minute-taking duties are to be done by the Administrative & Purchasing Assistant and will include action items and timelines. Action items will be reviewed at the end of the meeting. Minutes are to be distributed to the Team a week after the meeting.

Links to the meeting recording and transcripts will be distributed after each meeting with minor editing done within a week after the meeting. Recordings and transcript links will be disabled one month after distribution.

Deliverables

The focus of this committee is to:

- review and assist with prioritizing action items in response to feedback.
- review on our annual progress
- provide input on the ORL's next Accessibility Plan and other initiatives.

Resources and budget

1. Opt-in honorarium for community committee members is available at \$100 for each meeting attended. Committee members expected to do work preparing for meetings.
2. Reasonable accessibility supports, required for participation, will be provided. Such supports may include, but not limited to, interpreters for Deaf or hard of hearing individuals, technical equipment, and physical space, etc.
3. Requests to opt-in for the honorarium or for accessibility supports need to be shared with the Community Engagement Coordinator at least one week before each meeting.

Conflict of Interest

1. All meetings should begin with committee members disclosing all real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that they discover or that have been brought to their attention in connection with the AIAC's activities.
2. Committee members shall take proactive steps to mitigate all types of conflicts of interest.
3. A Committee member who stands to gain financially from a topic under review by the Committee must:
 - a. declare their conflict and not take part in the discussion of the topic or vote on any question in respect of the topic.
 - b. leave the meeting for the period during which the topic is under consideration; and
 - c. not attempt in any way, whether before, during, or after the meeting to influence the voting on any question in relation to the topic.

4. When warranted by the nature and magnitude of the conflict of interest, and where a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, the committee may request that a conflicted member end their commitment.

Review

The committee will complete a review of itself at the end of the term focusing on adherence to timelines and reporting back. Should the ORL determine that an ongoing committee is required current members may be invited to continue.

Personal Information

Any personal information collected during term of this committee is used to inform the ORL's work to improve accessibility and to create the new ORL Accessibility plan. Questions about data collection may be referred to the ORL's privacy information officer (mreinelt@orl.bc.ca).