Is Your Public Library Accessible? Study Report

[Executive Summary 4](#_Toc137555102)

[Key Findings 4](#_Toc137555103)

[Staff Knowledge and Training 4](#_Toc137555104)

[Physical and Digital Content 4](#_Toc137555105)

[Library Website and Catalogue 4](#_Toc137555106)

[Library Buildings and Spaces 4](#_Toc137555107)

[Library Programming 4](#_Toc137555108)

[Marketing and Communication 5](#_Toc137555109)

[Other Library Services 5](#_Toc137555110)

[Conclusions 5](#_Toc137555111)

[Introduction 6](#_Toc137555112)

[Research and Data Analysis 6](#_Toc137555113)

[Research Timeline 7](#_Toc137555114)

[Study Participants 7](#_Toc137555115)

[Participant Recruitment 7](#_Toc137555116)

[Participant Selection 7](#_Toc137555117)

[Focus Groups 8](#_Toc137555118)

[Library Evaluations 9](#_Toc137555119)

[Key Findings 9](#_Toc137555120)

[Staff Knowledge and Training 10](#_Toc137555121)

[Participant Quotes 10](#_Toc137555122)

[Summary 11](#_Toc137555123)

[Recommendations 11](#_Toc137555124)

[Physical and Digital Content 12](#_Toc137555125)

[Participant Quotes 12](#_Toc137555126)

[Summary 14](#_Toc137555127)

[Recommendations 15](#_Toc137555128)

[Library Website and Catalogue 15](#_Toc137555129)

[The Library Website 15](#_Toc137555130)

[The Library Catalogue 16](#_Toc137555131)

[Recommendations 17](#_Toc137555132)

[Library Buildings and Spaces 18](#_Toc137555133)

[Participant Quotes 18](#_Toc137555134)

[Summary 19](#_Toc137555135)

[Recommendations 19](#_Toc137555136)

[Library Programming 19](#_Toc137555137)

[Participant Quotes 19](#_Toc137555138)

[Summary 20](#_Toc137555139)

[Recommendations 20](#_Toc137555140)

[Marketing and Communication 20](#_Toc137555141)

[Participant Quotes 21](#_Toc137555142)

[Summary 21](#_Toc137555143)

[Recommendations 21](#_Toc137555144)

[Other Library Services 22](#_Toc137555145)

[Participant Quotes 22](#_Toc137555146)

[Summary 22](#_Toc137555147)

[Recommendations 22](#_Toc137555148)

[Conclusion 23](#_Toc137555149)

[Appendices 24](#_Toc137555150)

[Appendix A: Recruitment Survey Questions 24](#_Toc137555151)

[Appendix B: First Focus Group Questions 25](#_Toc137555152)

[Appendix C: Final Focus Group Questions 26](#_Toc137555153)

[Appendix D: Library Evaluation Guidelines 27](#_Toc137555154)

[Using Commonly Offered Services 27](#_Toc137555155)

[Using the Buildings and Spaces 28](#_Toc137555156)

[Using the Library Website and App 28](#_Toc137555157)

[Using the Library Catalogue 29](#_Toc137555158)

[Consuming Content 29](#_Toc137555159)

[Attending Library Programming 29](#_Toc137555160)

[Using Other Library Services 30](#_Toc137555161)

[Appendix E: Library Evaluation Survey Questions 31](#_Toc137555162)

[Library Evaluations 31](#_Toc137555163)

[Accessible Library Questions 31](#_Toc137555164)

[Rate your Library Experience 31](#_Toc137555165)

[Appendix F: Participant Quotes 33](#_Toc137555166)

[Staff Knowledge and Training Quotes 33](#_Toc137555167)

[Physical and Digital Content Quotes 33](#_Toc137555168)

[Library Website and Catalogue Quotes 33](#_Toc137555169)

[Library Buildings and Spaces Quotes 33](#_Toc137555170)

[Library Programming Quotes 34](#_Toc137555171)

[Marketing and Communication Quotes 34](#_Toc137555172)

[Other Library Services Quotes 35](#_Toc137555173)

[Appendix G: Recommendations 36](#_Toc137555174)

[Staff Knowledge and Training Recommendations 36](#_Toc137555175)

[Physical and Digital Content 36](#_Toc137555176)

[Library Website and Catalogue 37](#_Toc137555177)

[Library Building and Spaces 38](#_Toc137555178)

[Library Programming 38](#_Toc137555179)

[Marketing and Communication 38](#_Toc137555180)

[Other Library Services 38](#_Toc137555181)

# Executive Summary

The Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC), a collaborative project between the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), in partnership with eBOUND, conducted a two-pronged study to understand the accessibility of public libraries across Canada from the perspective and experiences of persons with lived experiences of a disability.

Conducted from June 2022 to January 2023, participants participated in two focus groups and a series of monthly surveys, discussing and evaluating the accessibility of their local public libraries. Based on the focus groups and library evaluations, the results were organized into key themes and suggested resources for getting started to help improve accessibility.

## Key Findings

Throughout the library evaluations, participants described some experiences as generally accessible but noted that they still encountered significant barriers.

### Staff Knowledge and Training

The study participants identified that the library staff’s availability, training, knowledge of potential barriers, and willingness to help significantly impact their ability and ease in accessing programs and services. This is particularly notable when barriers to accessibility exist for a particular program, service or resource and staff lack sufficient training or understanding of the issues people with disabilities face.

### Physical and Digital Content

Making accessible content available and easy to find should be a priority for libraries. Participants noted that accessibility should include books (physical and digital), e-resources, and other library items like DVDs, board games, music, and much more.

### Library Website and Catalogue

Libraries should work to ensure that their website and catalogue are accessible to all users. This includes testing your website and catalogue by persons with lived experiences and following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

### Library Buildings and Spaces

Library physical spaces often meet the minimum legal definition of accessible, but whether they are useable for people with a range of disabilities can vary from library to library.

### Library Programming

Participants identified significant accessibility barriers in the programs they evaluated, which could be mitigated by improving staff knowledge about accessibility needs so that programs can be developed with accessibility as a priority from conception through to completion and by asking participants about accessibility needs at the time of registration.

### Marketing and Communication

Discovering accurate, current, and accessible information about various accessible services, resources and programs was identified as an ongoing challenge by study participants. Ensuring marketing and communications activities are created with accessibility in mind removes a significant barrier and addresses the impression that libraries are not welcoming to people with disabilities.

### Other Library Services

Due to the pandemic, many libraries created or adapted services and programs, resulting in an impressive increase in accessibility. Participants in the study noted that these new policies, services, and program options should be maintained indefinitely.

## Conclusions

It is estimated that more than 1 in 10 people live with a disability, and barriers to access increase as the population ages. NNELS and CELA, in partnership with eBOUND, developed this study to aid Canadian libraries in identifying and addressing barriers to accessibility and to ensure the perspectives and experiences of people with lived experience are centred in this work. This study found that while libraries are making an ongoing effort to be accessible, there are areas where improvement and training are needed.

# Introduction

The *Is Your Public Library Accessible Study* (IYPLA) was conducted to learn about and collect the public library experiences of people with all types of disabilities across Canada. The experiences of people with disabilities are incredibly valuable in helping libraries understand how to remove barriers and create an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space for all.

This study was launched by the Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC) and its website, AccessibleLibraries.ca, a collaborative project between the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) in partnership with eBOUND. The goal of the study is to support Canadian libraries by offering resources and training on topics related to accessibility.

The goals of the IYPLA study were to understand the following:

* Based on patron experience with their library services, how accessible are Canadian public libraries?
* Do persons with disabilities consider that their libraries are accessible?
* What accessibility improvements still need to be made in public libraries?

To determine how accessible public libraries' physical and virtual spaces are, we proposed a multimethod study using focus groups and monthly library evaluation surveys. Focus groups helped us discover the participants' knowledge and personal experiences with libraries in a free-flowing discussion format. Participants completed surveys evaluating how accessible their libraries were during monthly visits.

The results of the study were organized into key findings. They are categorized as follows:

1. Staff Knowledge and Training
2. Physical and Digital Content
3. Library Website and Catalogue
4. Library Buildings and Spaces
5. Library Programming
6. Marketing and Communication
7. Other Library Services

PLARC can support libraries in their accessibility journey by providing learning and training opportunities, as noted in each section. The suggested supporting and training documents include guidelines on creating accessible services and links to existing accessibility resources.

# Research and Data Analysis

This study was a multimethod research project conducted over ten months. It involved two focus group discussions and several library evaluation surveys completed by multiple participants. The participant's commitment to this study was outstanding.

The study was conducted in both French and English.

## Research Timeline

The *Is Your Public Library Accessible Study* lasted from April 2022 to January 2023. The project had multiple stages:

## Study Participants

The study first needed to identify and recruit participants with lived experience of a disability to gather first-hand accounts, thoughts, and opinions from the persons to whom accessibility matters the most.

### Participant Recruitment

A screening survey was created and sent out with information about the study to recruit participants. The screening survey[[1]](#footnote-2) asked if:

* They self-identify as having a disability (either visible or invisible).
* They live in Canada.
* They have/can access a public library (in-person and/or virtual access).
* They are interested in making their library more accessible.

Additional demographic information was added to a screening survey to ensure a diverse group of participants across various dimensions, including age, sexual orientation, gender, race, annual income and whether participants were new to Canada.

The following participant recruitment methods were used to reach the broadest and most diverse number of people possible across Canada:

* Promotion through the NNELS and CELA networks and Canadian public libraries.
* Promotions through social media (Accessible Libraries, NNELS, and CELA social media accounts).
* Information about the study was sent to organizations that represent different disabilities.

We provided participants with an honorarium at the end of the study in the form of a $250 gift card. We advertised this honorarium in the study promotion materials.

While some information gathered during this study may be shared with Canadian public libraries, all names and identifying information, including specific disability types, ages, and geographical regions of the participants, will be kept entirely confidential.

### Participant Selection

Once the screening survey closed, the project team began participant selection. When selecting participants for the study, we aimed for diversity in disability, gender, sexuality, language, race, income, library (type and size), and location. To ensure that the whole library experience was evaluated.

Participants were removed from consideration if:

* They did not have a disability.
* They did not complete the entire survey.
* They stated that they did not want to join the study.
* They were associated with the planning of the study in any way.

All participants had lived experiences with a disability.

* 54% of participants have lived experience of a print disability.
* 15% of participants have lived experience of a cognitive disability.
* 46% of participants have lived experience of a physical or mobility disability.
* 8% of participants have a lived experience of a hearing disability.

Note: this doesn’t add up to 100% as some participants identified as having more than one disability.

The participants were located across Canada. The general geographical breakdown of selected participants is as follows:

* Eastern Canada: 77%
* Western Canada: 23%

## Focus Groups

During focus groups, participants were asked about how they used their library and how accessible their library was to them.[[2]](#footnote-3) Two online focus groups were conducted in this study:

* In June 2022, the initial focus group gathered the participants' impressions and personal experiences with accessibility at their public library before their library evaluations.
* In January 2023, the final focus group brought participants together to discuss and collect their final thoughts on their library and the study.

Both focus groups were conducted via Zoom. All the participants were brought together in the main meeting room to discuss the study, and breakout rooms were used for smaller group discussions.

We informed participants that all software we use was as accessible as possible and that we would include built-in captions. Participants were also asked if there were other ways we could support their participation in this project (e.g. an interpreter, etc.). The Zoom focus groups were recorded, and notes were taken during the discussion for data analysis. The recording and notes are confidential.

## Library Evaluations

Between June and January, the library evaluation surveys were sent out to participants monthly.[[3]](#footnote-4) The survey asked participants to detail their thoughts, opinions, and experiences regarding accessibility when visiting their library (in person, virtually, or both).

To support the participant’s library evaluations, we provided broad guidelines they could use during in-person and/or virtual visits, with experiences organized under the following categories:

* Using commonly offered services (checking out items, putting an item on hold, printing something, etc.)
* Using the library building and spaces (browsing the library bookshelves, using a library meeting room, etc.)
* Using the library website and app (finding the library hours, logging into your account, etc.)
* Using the library catalogue (looking for information or items, browsing the content, etc.)
* Consuming content (finding and reading content, looking for items in alternate formats, etc.)
* Attending library programming (attending a library event or class, etc.)
* Using other library services (using interlibrary loans, asking library staff questions, etc.)

The guidelines were optional and were created to give participants an idea of libraries' many services. Though the guidelines informed the general library evaluation survey categories, participants did not need to use them if they preferred not to, as they may have already been familiar with their library's services in those areas.

Participants were asked to indicate the areas they evaluated each month using the categories above. The library evaluation survey also contained questions asking participants if their library experiences were accessible, their likes and dislikes based on their experiences, and what they would change in their library. These open-ended and qualitative questions allowed participants to share their experiences and provide their opinions on how the accessibility of their library could be improved.

# Key Findings

The *Is Your Public Library Accessible Study* participants identified the gaps and barriers that prevented them from having an accessible library experience throughout the library, including library staff, content, and services. The key findings of this study reflect the participants’ feedback as it relates to all library operations (including policies, programs, collections, and the built environment). The description of the key findings contains information and quotes directly from the focus group discussions and library evaluations. [[4]](#footnote-5)

The key findings are categorized as follows:

1. Staff Knowledge and Training
2. Physical and Digital Content
3. Library Website and Catalogue
4. Library Buildings and Spaces
5. Library Programming
6. Marketing and Communication
7. Other Library Services

Throughout the library evaluations, participants described some experiences as generally accessible but noted they still encountered barriers. The accessibility barriers participants identified at the beginning and throughout the study were still present by the end of the study in January 2023. While the accessibility improvements and considerations libraries have implemented are significant and should be celebrated, we believe that full accessibility and equitable access should be a common goal so that people with disabilities do not have to settle for a “somewhat accessible” experience.

Because library operations and services are interconnected, barriers encountered by participants might be discussed in multiple places. For example, participants’ experiences accessing the content in the library may be detailed in either the Physical and Digital ContentorLibrary Buildings and Spaces categories*.*

PLARC can support libraries in their accessibility journey by providing learning and training opportunities, noted as recommendations in each section.[[5]](#footnote-6)

## Staff Knowledge and Training

Library staff are the cornerstone of accessibility in library services. The study participants identified that the library staff’s availability, training, knowledge of potential barriers, and willingness to help significantly impacted the participants’ ability and ease of accessing programs and services. This is particularly notable when barriers to accessibility exist for a particular program, service or resource and staff lack sufficient training or understanding of the issues people with disabilities face.

### Participant Quotes

The comments below capture the different experiences of the study participants.

Quote 1:

The library staff was eager to answer my questions… She was very comfortable to talk to and clearly enjoyed her job!

Quote 2:

"…sometimes, they feel uncomfortable accessing activities because [the participant] feels people are not ready to accept people with disabilities.”

Quote 3:

When I approached a librarian about borrowing a Daisy Player, she pointed and told me to speak with the other librarian at the other desk, as she handled those requests. Ideally, library staff should all have knowledge of these materials to assist anyone. I was disappointed that no staff approached me to assist me in locating audiobook titles.

Quote 4:

…would like his library to consult persons with disabilities. It would be easy for them to strike a committee of users with disabilities to understand their needs and provide useful information to the library.

Quote 5:

Consult, consult, consult. I cannot express it enough. Consult with the disabled community directly and implement the necessary changes.

### Summary

Because of previous library experience, and social stigma, people with disabilities can be reluctant to self-identify and seek assistance from library staff. In addition, people with disabilities may need additional assistance beyond what was identified in their initial request. Training for library staff must include technical training, sensitivity training, and coaching about ways to offer excellent customer service to people with disabilities.

Participants also encouraged libraries to hire staff with lived experiences in all areas of the library to be more representative of the community. Libraries will become more generally accessible if the workplace is accessible and the thoughts and opinions of persons with disabilities are a part of the organization. The participants believed this would lead to an inclusive library culture.

Library staff, knowledge and training programs should focus on these key areas:

* Ensuring awareness and comfort with library services and resources for people with disabilities.
* Understanding the various barriers people with disabilities experience to anticipate their needs.
* Ensuring the library workplace and staff spaces are accessible and hiring persons with lived experience with a disability. This experience will be helpful in understanding/informing the accessibility of library services and programs.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure all front-line staff have a baseline knowledge of the library's accessible resources and services.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Accessibility 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-accessibility-101/)
		3. [Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cfla-guidelines-on-library-and-information-services-for-people-with-disabilities/)
2. "Ensure that staff have the time to learn about the barriers people with disabilities encounter in accessing library services and the staff person’s role and responsibility to remove or mitigate those barriers.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
		2. [WebAIM’s Hierarchy for Motivating Accessibility Change](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/webaims-hierarchy-for-motivating-accessibility-change/)
		3. [General Resources on Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-library-service-for-the-blind-and-print-disabled-general-resources-on-disabilities/)
3. Ensure that all staff knows to discretely approach another staff regarding a patron with disabilities and respectfully transfer the patron to another staff member who can provide more comprehensive assistance when a transfer is needed.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 Webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Accessibility 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-accessibility-101/)
		3. [Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cfla-guidelines-on-library-and-information-services-for-people-with-disabilities/)
		4. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
4. Wherever possible, libraries should hire people with lived experience of disability and ensure their voices are present during discussions on service delivery, accessibility and related policies and procedures.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		3. [Accessible Canada Act](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-canada-act/)
		4. [Accessibility Support for Library Members & Staff](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-support-for-library-members-staff/)

## Physical and Digital Content

Making accessible content available and easy to find should be a priority for libraries to meet the needs of their community. Participants noted that accessible content should include books (physical and digital) and e-resources, and other library items like audiobooks, DVDs, board games, music, musical instruments, and devices like tablets and DAISY Readers.

### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

They helped me find the section where the DVD movies were that had described video services; they also helped me sign it out because it was not accessible for me to do on my own like others can…

Quote 2:

I went to where the audiobooks were, and looked for some titles to borrow. I was using my hand held magnifier, and looking very closely at the materials. for about 15 minutes. Although there were staff around, no one came up to me to ask if I needed help locating any titles.

Quote 3:

…I borrowed a preloaded tablet and when I got it home it didn’t work - this is the second tablet I have borrowed that I had to return that was not properly working or holding a charge.

Quote 4:

DVD's do not have described video services on all of them to audio describe certain features on the screen for the blind to understand what is happening on the screen; absolutely nothing is in braille; there is minimal books in large print; games are not accessible…

Quote 5:

It's only been in the last little while that I found the glory of some of these alternative libraries...

Quote 6:

I was not able to find a tutorial for a new Libby user to access the app using VoiceOver on their smart device or on the website. Written instructions are good for some library patrons to use when learning new apps/websites.

Quote 7:

In a perfect world, all books would be in all formats as soon as they are released and available at my finger tips when I go into a library to read them. I believe that more people who are blind, deafblind or partially sighted would enjoy libraries more.

Quote 8:

I used CELA for the most of searching and finding audiio books and e-pub books as there is more of a veriety. It gives me also options to read BRF files for braille displays; although I did use Libby, the selection of books is limited to e-pub or audio and that is if it is available in audio. Another thing about Libby is that I found it hard to find audio books at my library when a friend could find that same book at another library only a few minutes drive from my library.

Quote 9:

Scanning a DVD movie on a self-service station. No, this was not accessible, as using self-service stations to scan and borrow documents is difficult. For instance, one must place a DVD in its case right under an infrared beam. One must also push the document on a conveyor belt-like device.

Quote 10:

Well the book I got isn't in the format that I need but the book wasn't for me so. I can find it on bookshare but it didn't pop up in the library search so. I would have to search sperately.

Quote 11:

…I didn't like about it was other than some documentaries, there wasn't a lot of variety for lighter media consumption I do know a lot of the contemporary programming Is on the more extensive streaming services, but even older TV shows that I might find attractive didn't seem to be there which is disappointing to me and why I think it's an access thing is because I have the limited income I can't be spending a lot of money on streaming services and I rely a bit more on those services during the long winters we have here in Canada.

Quote 12:

What struck me however is the lack of visible appearance of books and other items about persons with disabilities, such as displays - or by authors with disabilities or on disability related topics. The only evident book I saw was “Care Work” on the display by BIPOC authors - and is written by a black, queer disabled woman. This is great but more needs to be done in this area.

### Summary

Providing books in all formats as soon as they are released is ideal but is often out of libraries' control. Ensuring that libraries offer accessible formats of books (like large print, EPUB, etc.) and other accessible content is vital for an inclusive patron experience.

People with disabilities who cannot find the accessible content they want in their library or who prefer accessing content digitally increasingly use e-resources through their libraries, such as Hoopla, CELA, NNELS, Libby, Bookshare, and OverDrive. Not all e-resources are created equal, and libraries should ensure that what they offer patrons is accessible to people with diverse types of disabilities, is properly promoted, and is easily found.

Accessing and checking out library content should be another area of focus for accessibility. People with disabilities should be able to independently find content and check it out using self-check kiosks with the same ease as other patrons. This information will be discussed further in Library Website and Catalogue and Library Buildings and Spaces.

Library content should be representative of their community. Disabilities and diversity should be represented in a library's catalogue. Participants stated that they would love their library to promote authors with disabilities. We suggest highlighting library content by persons with disabilities by creating displays, reading lists or online collections that are accessible and easy to find.

Providing access to physical and digital content should focus on these key areas:

* Advocating for the procurement of accessible content and e-resources for patrons with disabilities to ensure these resources are available.
* Procuring and promoting library content which includes disabilities and diversity.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure that libraries and staff know which physical and digital content is accessible, including formats, metadata, documentation, etc.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Evaluating the Accessibility of E-Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-the-accessibility-of-e-resources/)
		2. [Accessible Formats](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-network-for-equitable-library-service-accessible-formats/)
		3. [User Experience Guide for Displaying Accessibility Metadata 1.0](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/user-experience-guide-for-displaying-accessibility-metadata-1-0/)
		4. [Library Accessibility Features](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/library-accessibility-features/)
2. Provide supporting documents to help library staff procure and advocate for accessible content and e-resources. Additionally, be part of the solution and put procurement on the radar of any library colleagues, which will help find materials that are accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility Considerations for E-Resources Procurement in Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-network-for-equitable-library-service-accessible-formats/)
		2. [Questions for Vendors: Company Accessibility Policies](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-company-accessibility-policies/)
		3. [Questions for Vendors: Procuring Accessible E-Resources Platforms](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-procuring-accessible-e-resource-platforms/)
		4. [Checklist: Evaluating Vendor’s Accessibility](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-vendors-accessibility/)
3. Collaborate with colleagues from other libraries on a list of content by persons with a disability and other diverse communities to ensure representation.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Authors with Disabilities: Read Harder 2022](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/authors-with-disabilities-read-harder-2022/)
		2. [Best Dyslexia-Friendly Books for Kids](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/best-dyslexia-friendly-books-for-kids/)
		3. [A Novel Mind](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/a-novel-mind/)

## Library Website and Catalogue

Many participants use the library website and/or virtual interfaces. This includes the library website, library catalogue, and the Integrated Library System (ILS) provided by the libraries.

### The Library Website

The library website, an integral part of the organization, should be accessible to everyone, including those who use assistive technologies to access it.

#### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

Changes to the website to make it more accessible. I mean, and here again, it may be that I'm just not seeing it on the screen. I find it too many colours, and the font doesn't match the colours, and it's too busy looking for my vision loss. I have a hard time reading white font on a pale blue background, for example, or light blue font on a yellow background or, you know, those contrasts.

Quote 2:

 Library website has a simple design but only provides basic information. It links/has downloadable PDFs which are not inaccessible. They don’t think that the accessibility principles have been considered, and the overall accessibility of the site is no more than 60%.

#### Summary

Part of ensuring the library website is accessible is following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) so everyone can access it, including assistive technology users and users with low vision. Common issues participants experienced included:

* small font,
* poor colour contrast (the measurement calculated by comparing the brightness between two colours),
* overcrowded or too busy design,
* and navigation difficulties.

User testing of websites and catalogues by persons with lived experience with a disability is essential and the best way to ensure your site is accessible. Testers should all be appropriately paid for their time and expertise. One of the participants found that the website of their library, which was newly redesigned, was not accessible.

The library website is a great place to provide help documentation and information about accessibility. These instructions and other written materials should be provided in accessible formats like Word, HTML, EPUB3, and BRF.

Development and updates to library websites should focus on these key areas for accessibility:

* Following the WCAG guidelines when designing and implementing new features in the library website.
* Testing the library website by persons with a lived experience with a disability.
* Ensuring supporting or downloadable library documents, like help documentation and library events, are easily located and available in accessible formats.

### The Library Catalogue

An accessible library catalogue which works with assistive technologies is essential for patrons with disabilities to be able to find the content they are interested in. If the library catalogue is inaccessible, finding content independently can be difficult, frustrating, or unfortunately impossible, and it requires people with disabilities to seek additional staff support.

#### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

My library experience has been accessible, since the online content is easily to find and compatible with my phone technology.

Quote 2:

i didn't like how it take several clicks to find the catalogue not sure why isn't on the main page. I would be frustrating for a new comer to the site. I liked that the book was available and I could place it on hold.

Quote 3:

Accessibility is like a tree: the trunk is, for example, the accessible part of the Website. The various branches are the more detailed components, such as the library catalogue, and they are not very accessible.

#### Summary

It is important to note that the library does not control many of the library websites and virtual services, so accessibility in websites can be complicated. Library associations, cooperatives, and supporting organizations like the Public Library Resource Centre (PLARC) can play an important role in helping libraries advocate for accessible Library Management Software (LMS)/Integrated Library Systems (ILS) to ensure an accessible virtual library experience.

Accessibility considerations for the library catalogue should focus on these key areas:

* Ensuring the library catalogue is accessible for persons with disabilities by following the appropriate WCAG guidelines and hiring persons with disabilities to test it.
* Identifying and training library staff to overcome any accessibility barriers in the library catalogue, which may be out of their control to fix.
* Advocating for accessibility with their library’s LMS/ILS with the provider.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure that library information technology and digital content creators (such as those in charge of social media and communications for the library) know the WCAG guidelines and that they are implanted in the library's virtual interfaces.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Quick Reference](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/web-content-accessibility-guidelines-wcag-quick-reference/)
		2. [WebAIM Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/webaim-resources/)
		3. [Digital Library Accessibility and Usability Guidelines (DLAUG) to Support Blind and Visually Impaired Users](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/digital-library-accessibility-and-usability-guidelines-dlaug-to-support-blind-and-visually-impaired-users/)
2. Test the library’s virtual interfaces to ensure they are accessible by hiring persons with a disability.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility Insights](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-insights/)
		2. [Accessibility Auditing Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-auditing-resources/)
		3. [Professional Web Accessibility Auditing Made Easy](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/professional-web-accessibility-auditing-made-easy/)
3. Ensure that any library documents available to download are accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		2. [Creating Accessible Documents Webinar Recording](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cad-w-video/)
		3. [Make Your Word Documents Accessible to People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/microsoft-support-make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities/)
		4. [Creating Accessible Presentation: Getting Started Slides](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-presentation-getting-started-slides/)
4. Advocate for accessibility with your library’s LMS/ILS with the provider.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Questions for Vendors: Company Accessibility Policies](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-company-accessibility-policies/)
		2. [Questions for Vendors: Procuring Accessible E-Resources Platforms](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-procuring-accessible-e-resource-platforms/)
		3. [Checklist: Evaluating Vendor’s Accessibility](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-vendors-accessibility/)

## Library Buildings and Spaces

Library physical spaces often meet the minimum legal definition of accessible, but whether they are useable for people with a range of disabilities can vary from library to library.

### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

The two accessible parking spots…closest to the library face each other (that is, they are not side by side) and themselves are not large enough. Only one of these spots has an access aisle should I need to take my wheelchair out on the car's passenger side. The driver’s side of my car would be blocked by a car-length curb and not allow me to get my wheelchair out of my car.

Quote 2:

Participants also had trouble finding DVDs because they were very low… I had some trouble getting some DVDs they were so low to the floor that I had to get on the floor and practically lay down to find what I was looking for. I use both a walker and a wheelchair today I was using my walker so I was able to do this but it was very difficult and very painful…

Quote 3:

Personally, I would like to see more labelling in Braille on shelves to enable a blind person to find a particular audio book or DVD; label DVD's so we can find them and then take them to an accessible machine that will allow me to check out my library materials independently.

Quote 4:

I wish that each library had "way Finding" technology to assist blind, deafblind and partially sighted patrons to travel independently, and that aisles, books, audio books, movies, games, etc.

### Summary

Creating a fully accessible building and spaces can falter when details like high shelving and inaccessible signs are overlooked. Becoming more aware of the diverse needs of people with disabilities and engaging people with lived experiences to help create and assess spaces can lead to better accessibility for all. Making simple changes can often allow people with disabilities to use their library more independently.

Limitations to funding can often hinder the creation of fully accessible spaces. PLARC has collected resources to help libraries implement free or low-cost changes to make their spaces more accessible.

Creating accessible physical buildings and spaces should focus on these key areas:

* Ensuring the library building and spaces are accessible and functional for people with a variety of disabilities.
* Developing an understanding of details that are often overlooked that creating accessibility barriers in the library.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure that the library buildings and spaces are accessible by adhering to legislative requirements and patron feedback.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Quick Reference: Accessibility 101 For Public Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/quick-reference-accessibility-101-for-public-libraries/)
		2. [The 7 Principles of Universal Design](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/the-7-principles-of-universal-design/)
		3. [Accessible Spaces 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/powered-accessible-spaces-101/)
		4. [Accessible Canada Act](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-canada-act/)
2. Consider the details often overlooked in everyday usage of the library building and spaces.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		2. [Library Accessibility Features](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/library-accessibility-features/)

## Library Programming

Libraries are important community spaces which are, ideally, accessible to all. Considering accessibility needs in programming is one-way libraries can create welcoming spaces and encourage independent use. Participants in the study identified significant accessibility barriers in the programming they evaluated.

### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

I did however find when registering for the online program I chose for December, there was no information about who I should contact if I need accommodation or to request for example an alternate format of the book that will be discussed.

Quote 2:

I'd love to see more programming for people with disabilities. Hopefully, have any programming for people that fall under the developmental disability... We have maybe one program, I think maybe. But they run programs like the Lego program, and we I know a lot of our population would love to do a program like that…

### Summary

The programming doesn’t need to be complicated to be accessible. Providing library staff or guest presenters with instructions and training on accessibility and incorporating those concepts at all planning stages will improve the program.

Library programming (in-person and virtual) should focus on these key areas:

* Adapting and creating library programming to make it as accessible to everyone as possible, for example, describing images aloud during children’s storytime.
* Asking people, including persons with disabilities, what library programming they would be interested in.
* Creating programming that highlights authors with disabilities and asking, if possible, those authors to speak about their books.

### Recommendations

1. Create library programming designed to be accessible from the start, which will benefit everyone, for an inclusive library experience.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Creating Accessible Presentation: Getting Started Slides](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-presentation-getting-started-slides/)
		2. [Adaptive Umbrella](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/adaptive-umbrella/)
		3. [Accessible library programming for kids and teens](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-library-programming-for-kids-and-teens/)
2. Ensure existing library programming (in-person and virtual) is accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
		2. [Virtual Story Time Services Guide](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/virtual-story-time-services-guide/)

## Marketing and Communication

Libraries need to provide up-to-date information about the accessible services they offer patrons. Some participants could not find any information on the accessibility features or accessible services their library offers on its website or in the library itself. While the information may have been available, it was not easily found by the people who need it the most. It may have the unintended consequence of deterring people with disabilities from attending or participating. Making information and communications accessible, easy to find, and easy to understand will create welcoming, inclusive spaces and programs for all.

### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

It would be great if the library could send a newsletter featuring new services offered, including those related to accessibility. It could also contain, for example, the most borrowed books within a year. It could give ideas to readers.

Quote 2:

I imagine there may be more accessibility features at my library - they are just not promoted. Perhaps its a matter of "if you build it they will come, just let them know about it!" (smile). Sometimes folks have a habit of looking at what's not there or present rather than what is available!

Quote 3:

Even though I took a monthly newsletter home, the font is too small to read, but I plan to scan it and attempt to read it that way to find out about which programs I could participate in.

### Summary

Participants noted that they discovered accessible services and programs because they participated in this study and that the library did not publicize them. Informing the target audience about the accessibility services your library offers will encourage their use.

Marketing, communication, and promotional materials, including newsletters, social media, and signage, must be accessible. Communications promoting programs or services should highlight the accessibility features. People with disabilities may assume that if communications and promotional materials are not accessible, then they may encounter additional barriers in accessing library programs and services.

Accessible marketing and communication practices should focus on these key areas:

* Promoting the accessible features and services your library provides.
* Ensuring that all marketing and communication materials are accessible,

### Recommendations

1. Create accessible marketing and communication materials so that they are accessible to everyone.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Social Media Posts](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-social-media/)
		2. [Panel Discussion: Creating Accessible Social Media and Marketing](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/panel-discussion-creating-accessible-social-media-and-marketing/)
		3. [Quick Reference: Accessibility 101 For Public Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/quick-reference-accessibility-101-for-public-libraries/)
		4. [Guide to Image Descriptions](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessiblepublishing-ca-guide-to-image-descriptions/)
		5. [Audio Description Style Guide v 2.3](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/netflix-audio-description-style-guide-v2-3/)
2. Promote your accessible services so the target audience can learn about them.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		* [Library promotion resources – in development]

## Other Library Services

One significant area of note was the services created to counteract the effects of the pandemic. Many participants stated throughout the study that the new or improved services greatly benefited people with disabilities.

### Participant Quotes

Quote 1:

So one of the other things they did during covid was they towards I think more when they started to reopen a bit they had a curb pickup service. Where you could you know select a book in the catalog online and reserve it and then they'd say when can you come pick it up and you block your time and just go get it at the curb it would be on a trolley outside with your name, which I thought was just great.

Quote 2:

Only during the pandemic did they change it so you could renew your library card digitally.

### Summary

Library services adapted for the pandemic were generally accessible for participants, often providing library patrons more time to complete tasks, simplifying services, or adapting to limited contact. Participants would encourage libraries to maintain these service adaptations or consider introducing these services if they don't have them.

Other library services should focus on these key areas:

* Keeping the services developed during the pandemic and expanding upon them when they work.
* Working together with and learning from other libraries to provide accessible services.

### Recommendations

1. Extend the use of successful pandemic services and implement more similar options.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Virtual Story Time Services Guide](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/virtual-story-time-services-guide/)
		2. [Accessible library programming for kids and teens](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-library-programming-for-kids-and-teens/)
		3. [Adaptive Umbrella](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/adaptive-umbrella/)
2. Connect with libraries offering accessible services, and work with them to implement those programs in your library.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. Library Community Stories and Highlights are currently in development at PLARC.

# Conclusion

Participants identified accessibility barriers throughout their libraries that prevented them from having a fully accessible experience. The encounters and incidents they described are incredibly valuable in helping libraries understand how to remove barriers and create an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space for all. The key findings identified in this report reflect the primary areas library needs to focus on improving.

* Library staff had a significant impact on participants' experiences. Increasing staff knowledge and training on accessibility to promote more good interactions.
* Ensuring libraries have findable, accessible content (physical and digital) to support patrons’ information needs.
* Having accessible virtual spaces, the website and the catalogue gives everyone an equal experience using your library's digital services.
* Considering all aspects of the library's physical buildings and spaces and improving the accessibility of what you can.
* Adapting existing or creating new accessible library programming.
* Communicating and marketing your accessible services in an accessible way.
* Continuing to offer and/or work with other libraries to provide accessible services offered during the pandemic that patrons well received.

To help libraries address the findings from this report, we invite them to review the documents and resources available at the AccessibleLibraries.ca website and to engage with their users and staff to learn how to make their spaces, programs, and collections more accessible to people with disabilities.

If you have suggestions for additional resources to help libraries achieve their accessibility goals, please reach out to the Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre at info@accessiblelibraries.ca or use our [resource suggestion form](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/suggest-a-new-accessibility-resource/).

# Appendices

The supporting documents for the Is Your Public Library Accessible Study.

## Appendix A: Recruitment Survey Questions

The full list of questions the IYPLA study asked participants during recruitment. These questions were used to select a representative group of participants.

Information About You

1. Name
2. Email
3. Are you interested in participating in this study?
4. What Province/Territory do you live in? Please select the province/territory where you have your home address. If you do not have a home address, select the province/territory where you spend the majority of your time.
5. What gender do you identify with?
6. When participating in the focus groups, what language would you prefer to communicate in?
7. Have you immigrated to Canada within the last five years?
8. Do you identify as an Indigenous Person (including First Nations, Métis or Inuit)?
9. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and all other spectrums of sexuality) community?
10. What was your net household/family income in the last tax year?
11. Do you identify as having a disability (either visible or invisible)?

Visiting your Local Public Library

1. Do you use your local public library services?
2. What is the size of the community that your public library serves?
3. What language do you prefer your local library services in?
4. For this study, how will you visit your local public library?
5. Please tell us, what does an accessible library mean to you?

Questions and Comments

1. Please let us know if you need any accessibility requirements to participate in this study.
2. Questions or Comments

## Appendix B: First Focus Group Questions

1. Name
2. How do you use your library? If you don't use your library, can you tell us why you do not? This question can be about in-person visits, virtual visits, or why you don’t visit.
	1. If you haven’t visited or used your local library, what are your expectations for when you do visit? If you do visit your local library (in person or virtually), please skip this question.
3. How does your library meet your needs based on your specific requirements? If your library doesn't meet your needs in all areas of service, please describe that as well.
4. If you could change one thing about your library, what would it be and why?
5. Has your usage of your library changed throughout the pandemic?
6. Please describe how it has changed and/or has not changed.

## Appendix C: Final Focus Group Questions

1. Now, at the end of the study, what are your thoughts on the accessibility in your library?
	1. Did your experiences with accessibility change as you evaluated your library?
		1. How/Why/Why not?
	2. Were there any experiences that surprised you?
		1. Was there an experience that you thought would be inaccessible but was accessible? Please describe.
		2. Was there an experience that you thought would be accessible but was inaccessible? Please describe.
2. Which was the most accessible experience (service, material, program etc.) you used, and which was the least accessible and why?
	1. Possible follow-up questions:
		1. How did this accessible experience in the library make you feel about your library?
		2. How did the inaccessible library experience make you feel about your library?
		3. How would you suggest your library fix/improve the inaccessible service(s) you experienced?
		4. If applicable, which was the more accessible way to access your library – in-person or virtual visits? Why?
3. If there is one thing you would like to tell libraries about your experiences, what would it be?
4. What do you think is the first thing your library should do on its path to becoming more accessible?
5. Do you have any final thoughts or comments about accessibility in your library or libraries?

## Appendix D: Library Evaluation Guidelines

The guidelines are suggestions participants could use during their library evaluations. It has different examples of tasks and services libraries provide that participants could choose to test out during their in-person or virtual visits.

We suggest that participants choose experiences from three different categories each month to evaluate. We wanted participants to have and provide feedback on a well-rounded library experience (and on services that they may not have tried at their library before). They could evaluate in person, virtually, or both (if possible). These were just suggestions, we wanted participants to evaluate what worked best for them each month.

We noted that public libraries across Canada are different and provide different services. Not everything listed in the guidelines below may be available in their library, or we may have missed a service that participants would like to evaluate. Some actions or experiences are found under more than one category.

### Using Commonly Offered Services

Evaluate the everyday library tasks new and existing library users often do below. Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* Signing up for a library card.
* Asking library staff for help.
* Finding an item in the library catalogue.
* Finding a book you are interested in by browsing the bookshelves
* Checking out a book with the self-checkout kiosk.
* Checking out a book with library staff.
* Putting a library book on hold.
* Picking up a library book you’ve put on hold.
* Borrowing a museum and/or a park pass.
* Picking up a COVID-19 rapid test.
* In person library technologies
	+ Free and/or public library Wi-Fi
	+ Self-checkout kiosks
	+ Holding lockers
	+ Computers
	+ Photocopying
	+ Printing
	+ Scanning
	+ Faxing
	+ Public telephones
	+ Assistive technology

### Using the Buildings and Spaces

Evaluate the physical areas of your library. Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* Your physical library
	+ Entrance
	+ Lobby
	+ Bathrooms/Restrooms/Washrooms
	+ Bookshelves
	+ Seating
	+ Computer area
	+ Meeting rooms
	+ Study rooms
	+ Recording studios
	+ Makerspaces
	+ Sewing labs
	+ LEGO bricks
	+ Craft areas
	+ Art galleries
	+ Theatre
	+ Library parking
	+ Library transit stops

### Using the Library Website and App

Evaluate your library’s website and app (note your library may not have an app). Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* The homepage
	+ Finding the library opening hours and address
	+ Finding the job postings
	+ If there are any events at/by your library.
	+ Are there outreach resources
	+ Searching for something on the website
	+ Chatting with library staff
* Your library accounts
	+ Signing up and/or logging in to the website
	+ Checking out an item (book, eBook, audiobook, movie, music, magazine, etc.) on the website
	+ Placing a hold on an item (book, eBook, audiobook, movie, music, magazine, etc.) on the website
	+ Checking to see if you have any library fees
	+ Saving items to a list (e.g., to check out later)
	+ Finding instructions or help with your account
	+ Logging out of your account

### Using the Library Catalogue

Evaluate the library catalogue. Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* Searching the catalogue for an item (book, eBook, audiobook, newspapers, movie, music, CDs, magazine, etc.)
* Browsing the search results
* Finding more information about an item
* Finding items with the same subject, keyword, and/or author
* Commenting on an item in the library catalogue

### Consuming Content

Evaluate the content/items that your library provides. Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* This can include books, eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, music, special collections, newspapers, video games, reference materials (encyclopedias, etc.), board games, toys, puzzles, and other items that your library lets people borrow.
	+ The physical collection (the items that you find and check out from your library in person)
	+ The digital collection (the items that you find and check out from your library virtually)
	+ Specialized collections (items that you may be able to find in-person or virtually like music, art, local history, etc.)
* The library offers online catalogues or library reading apps with content
	+ Libby
	+ NNELS
	+ CELA
	+ PressReader
	+ Flipster
	+ Hoopla
	+ Creativebug
	+ TumbleBooks
	+ And more…

### Attending Library Programming

Evaluate your library’s programming (either in person or virtual). Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* Library programming
	+ Book clubs
	+ Writers in residence
	+ Language learning (English, Indigenous, Spanish, Mandarin, American Sign Language, etc.)
	+ Cooking classes
	+ Computer skills
	+ Storytime
	+ Singing
	+ Crafting
	+ And any other programming your library may offer.
* How library staff run library programming

### Using Other Library Services

Evaluate your library’s other services. Describe your thoughts on and experience with any of the following:

* Accessible services (services, content, devices, etc. that supports persons with disabilities)
	+ Homebound services (library staff deliver content to people who are unable or have difficulty leaving their homes)
	+ Library mail service (your library will mail a book)
* Reader’s advisory (suggested content based on library preferences either directly from library staff and other patrons if there is a rating system, or indirectly with book displays or promoted content on the website)
* Outreach services (provides services and referrals to people who are often underserved by their community and who aren’t necessarily library patrons).
* Inter Library Loan services (borrow an item from another library through your public library)
* Reference services (helps patrons find information and answer their questions)
	+ Ask library a staff a difficult question that they need to look up. For example, how many times has the Montreal Canadians hockey team won the Stanley Cup and how many games did they play in each of the final series they won.
* Information services (provides information about the library and helps patrons)
	+ Ask a member of the library staff for help
		- Looking for an item
		- For directions
		- Information about a library program
		- To reserve a meeting room
		- Using library technologies (printers, scanners, computers, etc.)
* Books deposits
	+ Book Mobiles
	+ Book vending machines (in youth centres, malls, etc.)
	+ Hold lockers
	+ Curbside pick up
	+ Books by mail.
* Technologies
	+ Microfiche
	+ Microfilm
	+ Mobile charging lockers
* Any additional services that your library offers but have not been mentioned above.

## Appendix E: Library Evaluation Survey Questions

The library evaluation questions were organized into three sections:

### Library Evaluations

1. Name
2. Did you visit your library in person, virtually, or both?
3. What was the date of your most recent library visit?
4. What area(s) did you evaluate in your library? Please check all that apply.
	1. Using commonly offered or basic services (asking library staff for help, checking out a book, printing or scanning an item, etc.)
	2. Using the building and spaces (using a library meeting room, parking, etc.)
	3. Using the library website and/or app (searching for information on the website, signing into your library account, etc.)
	4. Using the library catalogue (searching an online catalogue for an item, browsing content by the same author, etc.)
	5. Consuming content (accessing a book from a library reading app like Libby, checking out a video game from the library, reading a large print book, etc.)
	6. Attending library programming (joining and attending a book club, etc.)
	7. Using other library services (homebound services, reference services, the library holds locker, etc.)
	8. Other, please specify

### Accessible Library Questions

1. Was your library experience accessible this month? Why or why not?
2. Please describe what was accessible or inaccessible in each of the services and library categories you evaluated this month.
3. What did you like and/or dislike about your library experience this month? Please consider the library services and categories you experienced this month when answering this question.
4. What would you change about your library experience this month? Please describe what you would change (in a perfect world) for each of the library services and categories you evaluated to make them fully accessible for your specific requirements.
5. Was the library staff helpful during your visit (in person and/or virtual)? Please describe how the library staff was helpful or unhelpful during your visit (in person and/or virtual).

### Rate your Library Experience

We used skip logic for this section. Questions are only available depending on the areas evaluated selected in “Library Evaluations” question 4.

1. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience using commonly offered or basic services this month? 1 means the library experience was inaccessible, and 5 represents a very accessible library experience.
2. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience using the building and spaces this month? 1 means the library experience was inaccessible, and 5 represents a very accessible library experience.
3. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience using the library website and/or app this month?
4. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience using the library catalogue this month?
5. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience consuming library content this month?
6. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience attending library programming this month?
7. On a scale of 1-5, how accessible did you find your library experience using other library services this month?

## Appendix F: Participant Quotes

The quotes in this appendix are organized by the Key Findings they best relate to.

### Staff Knowledge and Training Quotes

Quote 1:

Certains font tout pour aider, d'autres pas, selon les cas…

Quote 2:

Répond à la demande d'accéder à un livre, mais ne prend pas les devant. Personnel peu occupé, mais laisse circuler longtemps sans intervenir ou offrir d'aide. Malaise? Ignorance?

### Physical and Digital Content Quotes

Quote 1:

Après plusieurs tentatives infructueuses, il est possible que je choisisse de ne plus retourner et de choisir des services ailleurs. Par exemple, je préfère payer pour les services de Netflix ou Amazon pour avoir facilement des films avec audiodescription. J'espère toujours que ma bibliothèque offrira davantage de contenus accessibles à l'avenir.

### Library Website and Catalogue Quotes

Quote 1:

Il est essentiel de maintenir et développer les sites web accessibles pour les utilisateurs de revue d'écran et les afficheurs braille.

Quote 2:

…c’est ce qui arrive lorsqu’un site est déployé sans avoir effectué de test avec des utilisateurs. La raison donnée était que le [site de la bibliothèque] devait absolument lancer son nouveau site et que le temps ne permettait donc pas de faire les tests utilisateurs tel que prévu. C’est vraiment choquant… il ne s’agit en rien d’un site pensé pour des personnes avec des limitations, plutôt pour des bibliothécaires; tout nécessite plusieurs étapes qui pourraient être facilement évitées.

Quote 3:

Les a améliorer: l'accessibilité du catalogue et visibilité des boutons qui était pale et ton sur ton, la notification de reception en plus gros caractères, le système de recuperation sur des etagères, avec les papiers est moins adapté pour malvoyant/aveugles.

### Library Buildings and Spaces Quotes

Quote 1:

Les a améliorer: la hauteurs des étagères dont celles des nouveautés, les identifications des cotes impossibles pour les malvoyants- trop petits, affichage pas assez contrastant, idem pour identification des cotes individuelles pour chaque livre. Aucun appareil destiné a facilitater le repérage sur place. Ai apporté ma propre loupe. On indique de simplement s'adresser au bibliothécaire.

Quote 2:

L'entrée accessible mais la deuxième porte ouvre sur nous et frappe le fauteuil motorisé coincé entre deux portes. Pas de comptoir plus bas pour les fauteuils roulants. Poste informatique trop haut. Toillettes accessible mais trop petite pour fermer la porte.

Quote 3:

Oui a environ 60-65%. Une evaluation generale de l'uilisation des lieux a été effectuée. par contre, je connaissais les lieux pour y avoir deja accédé et y avoir été accompagnée précédemment. Il n'est pas sur que l'expérience d'orientarion aurait été similaire pour quelqu'un de malvoyant s'y présent ait pour la,premiere fois. Les lieux sont carrés mais les voies de circulation sont complexes et ardues pour le repérafe. C'est design mais difficile et emcombré pour l'accès avec une canne d'aveugle. Les aires de circulation ne sont pas claires et logiques. Il y a quelques obstacles au bout des allée qui posent problèmes. Enfin les poste de consultation informatiques ne sont pas tout à fait adaptés pour les malvoyants.

### Library Programming Quotes

Quote 1:

Y furent fait des déminstrations seulement avec la transformation de vetements usages a portés par les participants.Je me suis assisté a l'avant et ai mentionné mon handicap visuel a l'animateur. Le tout pour une durée et deux heures des travaux aiguilles et de la couture sur machine à coudre. Ils n'étaient pas habitués avec cette clientele. L'animateur a quelques reprises a approché l'ouvrage avec que je puisse examiner de plus près. J'I aussi eu le sentiment qu'elle était portée a décrire davantage. Cet atelier n'étaient pas vraiment adapté aux malvoyants. Peut-être était-ce previsible avec la thématique et que j'aurais du choisir une simple conférence, mais j'étais curieuse…. J'estime l'accessibilité a environ 40%.

### Marketing and Communication Quotes

Quote 1:

L'étude m'a permis de mieux découvrir les services de ma bibliothèque et je réalise qu'il me reste encore beaucoup à découvrir et à évaluer.

Quote 2:

Ceservice [une service de livraison de certains livres, DVD musique et film d'une collection spéciale par Poste Canada pour les personnes de 65+ ou pouvait attestée d'un handicap.] devrait être mieux pupblicisée car j'ai appris son existence par hasard en realisant cette étude!

### Other Library Services Quotes

Quote 1:

Pendant les heures d'ouverture, pendant la pandémie, une salle de tri en verre a été construite et un guichet de retour completement informatisé a été intégré. Pour effectuer un retour, il faut simplement scanner le code barre du document placé sur le dessus de la couverture et ensuite le pousser dans la chute. Ce mode de retour est simple, rapide, pratique, instantané et sans contact. L'accessibilité est estimée a environ 90%.

## Appendix G: Recommendations

A full list of the report recommendations.

### Staff Knowledge and Training Recommendations

1. Ensure all front-line staff have a baseline knowledge of the library's accessible resources and services.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Accessibility 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-accessibility-101/)
		3. [Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cfla-guidelines-on-library-and-information-services-for-people-with-disabilities/)
2. "Ensure that staff have the time to learn about the barriers people with disabilities encounter in accessing library services and the staff person’s role and responsibility to remove or mitigate those barriers.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
		2. [WebAIM’s Hierarchy for Motivating Accessibility Change](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/webaims-hierarchy-for-motivating-accessibility-change/)
		3. [General Resources on Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-library-service-for-the-blind-and-print-disabled-general-resources-on-disabilities/)
3. Ensure that all staff knows to discretely approach another staff regarding a patron with disabilities and respectfully transfer the patron to another staff member who can provide more comprehensive assistance when a transfer is needed.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 Webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Accessibility 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-accessibility-101/)
		3. [Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cfla-guidelines-on-library-and-information-services-for-people-with-disabilities/)
		4. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
4. Wherever possible, libraries should hire people with lived experience of disability and ensure their voices are present during discussions on service delivery, accessibility and related policies and procedures.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility 101 webinar](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-101-for-canadian-public-library-staff-webinar-recording/)
		2. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		3. [Accessible Canada Act](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-canada-act/)
		4. [Accessibility Support for Library Members & Staff](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-support-for-library-members-staff/)

### Physical and Digital Content

1. Ensure that libraries and staff know which physical and digital content is accessible, including formats, metadata, documentation, etc.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Evaluating the Accessibility of E-Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-the-accessibility-of-e-resources/)
		2. [Accessible Formats](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-network-for-equitable-library-service-accessible-formats/)
		3. [User Experience Guide for Displaying Accessibility Metadata 1.0](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/user-experience-guide-for-displaying-accessibility-metadata-1-0/)
		4. [Library Accessibility Features](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/library-accessibility-features/)
2. Provide supporting documents to help library staff procure and advocate for accessible content and e-resources. Additionally, be part of the solution and put procurement on the radar of any library colleagues, which will help find materials that are accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility Considerations for E-Resources Procurement in Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/national-network-for-equitable-library-service-accessible-formats/)
		2. [Questions for Vendors: Company Accessibility Policies](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-company-accessibility-policies/)
		3. [Questions for Vendors: Procuring Accessible E-Resources Platforms](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-procuring-accessible-e-resource-platforms/)
		4. [Checklist: Evaluating Vendor’s Accessibility](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-vendors-accessibility/)
3. Collaborate with colleagues from other libraries on a list of content by persons with a disability and other diverse communities to ensure representation.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Authors with Disabilities: Read Harder 2022](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/authors-with-disabilities-read-harder-2022/)
		2. [Best Dyslexia-Friendly Books for Kids](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/best-dyslexia-friendly-books-for-kids/)
		3. [A Novel Mind](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/a-novel-mind/)

### Library Website and Catalogue

1. Ensure that library information technology and digital content creators (such as those in charge of social media and communications for the library) know the WCAG guidelines and that they are implanted in the library's virtual interfaces.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Quick Reference](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/web-content-accessibility-guidelines-wcag-quick-reference/)
		2. [WebAIM Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/webaim-resources/)
		3. [Digital Library Accessibility and Usability Guidelines (DLAUG) to Support Blind and Visually Impaired Users](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/digital-library-accessibility-and-usability-guidelines-dlaug-to-support-blind-and-visually-impaired-users/)
2. Test the library’s virtual interfaces to ensure they are accessible by hiring persons with a disability.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Accessibility Insights](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-insights/)
		2. [Accessibility Auditing Resources](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessibility-auditing-resources/)
		3. [Professional Web Accessibility Auditing Made Easy](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/professional-web-accessibility-auditing-made-easy/)
3. Ensure that any library documents available to download are accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		2. [Creating Accessible Documents Webinar Recording](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/cad-w-video/)
		3. [Make Your Word Documents Accessible to People with Disabilities](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/microsoft-support-make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities/)
		4. [Creating Accessible Presentation: Getting Started Slides](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-presentation-getting-started-slides/)
4. Advocate for accessibility with your library’s LMS/ILS with the provider.
	* 1. [Questions for Vendors: Company Accessibility Policies](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-company-accessibility-policies/)
		2. [Questions for Vendors: Procuring Accessible E-Resources Platforms](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/questions-for-vendors-procuring-accessible-e-resource-platforms/)
		3. [Checklist: Evaluating Vendor’s Accessibility](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-evaluating-vendors-accessibility/)

### Library Building and Spaces

1. Ensure that the library buildings and spaces are accessible by adhering to legislative requirements and patron feedback.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Quick Reference: Accessibility 101 For Public Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/quick-reference-accessibility-101-for-public-libraries/)
		2. [The 7 Principles of Universal Design](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/the-7-principles-of-universal-design/)
		3. [Accessible Spaces 101](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/powered-accessible-spaces-101/)
		4. [Accessible Canada Act](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-canada-act/)
2. Consider the details often overlooked in everyday usage of the library building and spaces.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Documents](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-documents/)
		2. [Library Accessibility Features](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/library-accessibility-features/)

### Library Programming

1. Create library programming designed to be accessible from the start, which will benefit everyone, for an inclusive library experience.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Creating Accessible Presentation: Getting Started Slides](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-presentation-getting-started-slides/)
		2. [Adaptive Umbrella](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/adaptive-umbrella/)
		3. [Accessible library programming for kids and teens](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-library-programming-for-kids-and-teens/)
2. Ensure existing library programming (in-person and virtual) is accessible.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Project Enable](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/project-enable/)
		2. [Virtual Story Time Services Guide](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/virtual-story-time-services-guide/)

### Marketing and Communication

1. Create accessible marketing and communication materials so that they are accessible to everyone.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Checklist: Creating Accessible Social Media Posts](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/checklist-creating-accessible-social-media/)
		2. [Panel Discussion: Creating Accessible Social Media and Marketing](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/panel-discussion-creating-accessible-social-media-and-marketing/)
		3. [Quick Reference: Accessibility 101 For Public Libraries](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/quick-reference-accessibility-101-for-public-libraries/)
		4. [Guide to Image Descriptions](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessiblepublishing-ca-guide-to-image-descriptions/)
		5. [Audio Description Style Guide v 2.3](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/netflix-audio-description-style-guide-v2-3/)
2. Promote your accessible services so the target audience can learn about them.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		* [Library promotion resources – in development]

### Other Library Services

1. Extend the use of successful pandemic services and implement more similar options.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. [Virtual Story Time Services Guide](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/virtual-story-time-services-guide/)
		2. [Accessible library programming for kids and teens](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/accessible-library-programming-for-kids-and-teens/)
		3. [Adaptive Umbrella](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/resources/adaptive-umbrella/)
2. Connect with libraries offering accessible services, and work with them to implement those programs in your library.
	1. Resources to get you started:
		1. Library Community Stories and Highlights are currently in development at PLARC.
1. To review all the screening survey questions, refer to *Appendix A*.  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The focus group questions used for the initial and final discussions are available in *Appendix B* and *Appendix C*.  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The library evaluation guidelines and questions are in Appendix D and Appendix E.  [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. More participant quotes are available in Appendix F. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A full list of the recommendations provided by this report are available in Appendix G. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)