



:. ontario library association

November 8, 2016

Honourable Eleanor McMahon

Minister

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport/Minister Responsible the Ontario Trillium Foundation

9th Floor, Hearst Block, 900 Bay Street

Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister McMahon:

The Ontario Library Association represents more than 5,000 members who work with, or support, libraries (public, academic, school, special). We are writing to emphasize the need for continued and sustained investment in the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to ensure all public libraries in Ontario can provide accessible library services.

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

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

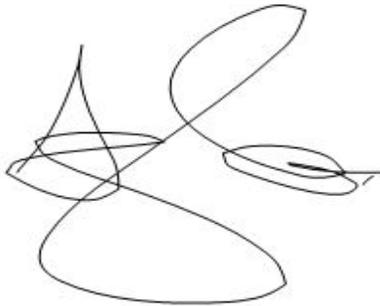
This model requires sustained funding at the provincial level to ensure AODA compliance and to provide equity of service for all Ontarians who have a print disability. It is important to emphasize the need for this funding to be in addition to the ongoing and invaluable investment our government has made in public libraries in the form of operating and project grants.

People with print disabilities deserve the same reading opportunities as other Ontarians. CELA provides these by making more than 400,000 accessible e-books in English and French available in the format of the reader's choice through local public libraries. They are committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, play, and invest in their communities: they are the "community hub" for ALL residents. In Ontario, 310 public libraries participate in CELA as member libraries, including 45 First Nation public libraries. Last fiscal year, close to 1 million items were circulated to approximately 14,000 Ontario CELA users with print disabilities and 239 member libraries offer deposit collections totaling 108,488 titles.

CELA is also a partner with OLA in supporting participation in the Forest of Reading Program for young readers who have a print disability. The Forest of Reading is Canada's largest reading program of it's kind with more than 250,000 young readers participating annually. Thanks to CELA, kids who have a print disability can read a selection of the nominated Canadian authored books in braille, audio, or e-text depending on their format preference, and can vote for their favourite book alongside their peers.

CELA arose in response to a need from public libraries to extend the CNIB collection of materials, intended for people who are blind or have vision loss, to people who have other perceptual or print disabilities. OLA is a dedicated supporter of CELA ensuring their staff has opportunities to communicate updates to OLA members, to present at the OLA Super Conference, and to present on services virtually through the Education Institute. We encourage a continued investment in this important service and look forward to supporting accessible library services for all.

Sincerely,



Todd Kyle, president

CC. Kevin Finnerty, ADM, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Stephen Abram, Executive Director, Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

ontario library association
2 Toronto Street, 3rd Floor
toronto, ontario, canada
m5c 2b6

a member of ^{the} PARTNERSHIP

phone: 416.363.3388
.. toll-free: 1.866.873.9867
fax: 416.941.9581
.. toll-free: 1.800.387.1181
email: info@accessola.com
web: www.accessola.com