ADA ACCESS STATEMENT & PLAN

approved by Loft Board November 2026

BACKGROUND, General

In 1990, the United States Congress enacted into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which guarantees equal and full access to employment and public services for people with disabilities. Since its implementation, many people have been served and hired throughout the country and actions have been taken to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility.

BACKGROUND, Facility

In 1998, with its partners Minnesota Center for Book Arts and Milkweed Editions, the Loft Literary Center founded a non-profit organization for the purpose of acquiring, renovating, and operating a new center for books and literary arts in Minnesota. The group identified a building, formed a capital campaign committee, and proceeded to create the new center, called Open Book, at 1011 Washington Avenue South in Minneapolis.

The Loft moved into Open Book in April 2000. Open Book officially opened in May 2000.

Open Book had previously been three warehouse buildings. The Open Book board of directors worked closely with the architect and contractor to meet and, in many instances, exceed ADA requirements for buildings of this type. To assist the board in this activity, the Open Book board formed an Advisory Group, composed significantly of people with disabilities.

ACCESS STATEMENT

The Loft Literary Center is committed to making its programs, classes and facilities accessible to all, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, veteran status, public assistance status, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or disability, and we do not discriminate in employment on the basis of any of these criteria. We endeavor to remove any hindrance to the participation in our program by persons with disabilities. Loft programs at Open Book are fully accessible with disability parking by the backdoor, wheelchair accessible bathrooms, elevators to all floors, and other services available as requested. In addition, a site's accessibility and ADA compliance is one of the criteria the Loft uses to evaluate the site's suitability for off-site programming.

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THE LOFT'S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. Accessibility Coordinator. The Senior Director of Community Engagement of The Loft Literary Center or their designee is the Loft's Accessibility Coordinator. The Accessibility Coordinator serves as an access resource, gathering resource materials and attending workshops on access issues; assists in educating staff, board, and volunteers about disability services and access issues; develops regular, ongoing review mechanisms for the Loft, including consultation on new policies, programs and services; evaluates the accessibility of the Loft's facilities, programs, and services, and makes recommendations for needed improvements; assists in developing the Loft's outreach to people in the community who have disabilities.

2(a). Advisory Group, Facility. The board of directors of the Minnesota Center for Book and Literary Arts, Inc. (Open Book) appointed an advisory group to help it plan the new facility for accessibility. People with disabilities comprised a significant portion of the group. In addition, facility accessibility will be a consideration for Loft program partner sites.

2(b). Advisory Group, Programs and Services. The Loft is developing an accessibility advisory group in collaboration with Open Book. We are investigating a building-wide approach or partner approach for this work. In addition to this advisory work, the Loft has actively sought guidance from technology providers and service constituents to identify and address accessibility issues related to the Loft's programs and services. All program evaluations include a question about participant disabilities and whether they were a barrier to their participation.

3. Accessibility Audit. An Access Audit (the version provided by the Metro Regional Arts Council or one similar to it) will be conducted biannually in even years by the Loft's Accessibility Coordinator. The results of this audit will be presented to the Loft's staff and Board of Directors. Access plan update reports will be completed following each access audit.

4. Organizational Policy. The Loft's policy regarding its commitment to access for people with disabilities, which was approved by the Board, by its Executive Committee, on December 15, 1998, is:

> The Loft Literary Center does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs

or activities. Upon request, the Loft staff will provide reasonable accommodations, reasonable modifications, and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in Loft services, programs, and activities, unless doing so would constitute an undue burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

The Loft Literary Center has a designated coordinator to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations.

5. Training. The Loft provides regular education on ADA programs and services for staff and board members.

CURRENT SERVICES AND COMPLIANCE

Facility

The Open Book facility, as managed and maintained by Open Book, is equipped with accessible designated long-term parking, and is conveniently located on major bus routes. The building entrances/exits open out and are marked with the international accessibility symbol. The doors can be opened automatically by a button that is marked with the accessibility symbol, and they close slowly. There are no stairs or ramps at either the front or back exterior entries. Per ADA guidelines, a ramp was built inside the back door, designed with a slope that is compliant with standards.

The Loft's reception desk and event reception areas are accessible for people in wheelchairs, and restrooms (including faucets, dispensers and stalls) are fully accessible and marked. The public drinking fountains have a front face control and are accessible by wheelchair.

Access to the performance hall is navigable by people in wheelchairs, and seating is not permanently installed, so can be arranged to accommodate individual needs, including trained service dogs, companions and personal care attendants. The performance hall is equipped with assistive listening devices for those who are hard of hearing.

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The building's elevator is fully accessible, including call buttons and Braille on all interior and exterior lift signage. The elevator door opens and closes slowly.

Each classroom features posted emergency exit procedures that include some information about assisting those with disabilities during an evacuation. There is space at the front and back entrances that can serve as holding areas during an emergency evacuation.

In 2026, the Loft purchased new assistive listening devices for use in our spaces upon request.

In 2013, a grant from VSA Minnesota allowed us to make further improvements. The Loft relocated the entrance to the Rachel Ann Gaschott Ritchie Resource Library, adding a wide automated double door to make the library more visible and accessible to people with mobility impairments. Constituents must go through the library and a secured door to enter the writers' studios. The grant also allowed us to automate the writers' studio entrance and the Loft's office doors.

Other improvements were made as part of renovations and upkeep of the Open Book. These improvements have included the following:

a. Sound insulation. Sound spill had become a problem for constituents taking Loft classes and attending Loft events at Open Book. To address the issue, the Loft's classrooms, the performance hall, and the rooftop patio all received additional sound insulation to address noise overflow. The floor of the performance hall was soundproofed to mitigate noise spilling into the Minnesota Center for Book Arts' studio directly below. Soundproofing insulation was also installed in a number of classrooms to address noise overflow from spaces above, below, or beside them.

b. Floor surface. The first Open Book renovation in 2000 featured the former warehouse buildings' original wood flooring, which was resurfaced and sealed. Retaining the character of the original flooring was an aesthetic decision made during the architectural planning process, but the many cracks and gaps created mobility problems. These cracks and gaps have been filled, and flooring in some spaces such as classrooms has been leveled and resurfaced for easier mobility through the building, including the Loft's spaces.

e. Parking lot resurfacing. Open Book's free public parking lot, adjacent to the building, was resurfaced in 2021 to address mobility challenges from deterioration of the concrete over time. The formerly broken surface is now smooth and provides easy access from the accessible parking spaces for people using wheelchairs or otherwise facing mobility challenges.

Programs and Services

The Loft continues to provide significant support and services to include, welcome, and integrate constituents who have disabilities. We offer captioning, and/or American Sign Language interpretation upon request with advanced notice. Interpreters and patrons can be situated anywhere in our performance hall and classrooms that is convenient for them. We also make materials available in large print and have provided materials in Braille upon request.

The Loft received a special gift to its endowment in 2007, the Rachel Vaughan Memorial Fund, which helps support the Loft's accessibility services and accommodations. On the rare occasion when an individual's requested accommodation exceeds our capacity, the Loft will offer alternative accommodation, such as access to an equivalent class online at the same price or one-on-one mentorship.

All print and electronic promotions that invite public participation feature the following language: "*The Loft is committed to accessible programs for all. To request accommodations, use our request form at **loftlit.co/ada** or contact us at 612-215-2575. To allow sufficient time to arrange accommodations, requests should be made at least three weeks in advance whenever possible. Requests received with less notice will be considered and accommodated to the extent reasonably possible. Supported by the Rachel Vaughn Memorial Fund. Learn more at **loft.org/accessibility***."

Organizations that serve people with disabilities are among our mailing and distribution lists. We have conducted special, targeted promotions for programs designed to engage specific populations with disabilities.

Although we are unable to offer discounts to classes or events based on disability status, most of our public events have only a "suggested admission" of $5-$10 with no one turned away, and access funds provide 90% discounts to people who face economic barriers to participating.

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The Loft strives to maintain its website and digital content in accordance with recognized accessibility standards, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We underwent a website audit in 2025. We were able to implement the most urgent improvements to the site then and are in the process of implementing the remaining recommendations.

In addition, the Loft provides explicit and detailed information about accessibility services and amenities: www.loft.org/accessibility.

In our programming, we offer online classes, online coaching, and manuscript review which exponentially expanded the Loft's service to, and access for, people with disabilities. We also continue to improve and enhance our website and its content.

The Open Book performance hall is undergoing improvements to add two PTZ cameras. This will provide opportunities to record and livestream events, increasing the accessibility of our events.

The Loft's largest participation from people with disabilities is with individuals who have hearing impairments but are not ASL speakers.

Please contact the Loft's Accessibility Coordinator, Chris Jones at cjones@loft.org, with any questions or concerns about accessibility.

Updated November 2026