

MINISTRY OF Research and Innovation

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessible Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government, will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation third annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation will continue to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people with all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at: www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans08.htm

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will ensure that all staff members are and trained to assist clients with disabilities by developing and implementing a ministry training strategy to target all staff.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to provide accessibility training and information sessions for all ministry staff, including a session targeted for managers. The Accessibility Planning Team will work with all program areas to develop new ideas and initiatives regarding accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

Notification/reminders are sent to all new managers and supervisors identifying the need to complete the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* training. In May 2008 during National Access Awareness Week the “May I Help You” and the “AODA: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities” e-learning courses were promoted to all staff and management as part of their ongoing professional development. The ministry co-hosted an accessibility lunch and learn session for staff: “Accessibility on our Communities and within our Workplace.” Staff were invited to attend the November 2007 session on accessibility which featured The Honourable David C. Onley, Lt. Governor of Ontario as the keynote speaker.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Accessibility information will be included as a component of the ministry’s orientation sessions for managers, staff, students and interns.

Planned Action(s):

Information on the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* and related accessibility programs and services will be included in the new employee orientation manuals.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2009

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008: To be reported in next year’s Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

Inform our third-part service providers of the new accessibility standards for customer service.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will achieve this commitment by reviewing/amending existing agreements and adjusting wording in the template procurement agreements to reflect obligations, as required, and also to ensure compliance (e.g. training in accessible customer service). The ministry plans to work with third parties to ensure the targets and timetables meet compliance for the new customer service standard. Performance of third-party compliance will also be monitored.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – December 2009

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: To be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

The ministry will build on its strategies for providing information in an accessible format to ensure compliance under the new Customer Service Standard.

Planned Action(s):

Communications and Outreach, Promotion and Business Development Branches will continue to offer alternative formats, whenever requested. Communications Branch will ensure that the ministry website meet or exceed the World Wide Web Consortium criteria.

TTY access will be offered in the reception areas for Human Resources and ministry receptions located on the 7th and 11th floor at 56 Wellesley Street West.

Reception staff will be trained on how to operate the equipment. The ministry will acquire business cards in Braille as part of providing information in an accessible format.

The ministry intranet site will provide information on how to plan accessible meetings and event. Each program area will review its programs and services on an ongoing basis to ensure they are accessible to clients and the public.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008: To be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing
Creation of the Accessibility Planning Team

Planned Action(s):
Committee members will be appointed as required to deliver on ongoing Accessibility requirements and initiatives.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2009

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: Accessibility Planning Team Lead as been appointed.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing
Awareness raised regarding accessibility issues by attending Branch meetings.

Planned Action(s):
Accessibility Planning Team will provide regular Accessibility requirements updates to Senior Management and Branch meetings.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: To be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Complete
Ministry program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under Section 5 of the AODA.

Planned Action(s):
The Corporate Service Division to provide training to ministry staff on the Ontarians With Disabilities Procurement Requirements.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007- March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

Procurement training sessions for staff and managers were held during 2007-2008 which included an opportunity for ministry staff to increase their knowledge and awareness of the Ontarians with Disabilities Procurement Requirements and how to access information and resources related to Ontarians with disabilities.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

The Ministry of Research and Innovation was successful in achieving many of its commitments described in the 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan and is committed to building on these successes to continue to enhance accessibility for ministry employees and our clients.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy and Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Provide all possible opportunities for persons with disabilities to succeed in the hiring process.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will work with our Corporate Human Resources, OPS Recruitment Centres and OPS Executive Services to ensure the ministry is providing accessibility requirements for the hiring process which includes the following:

- The ministry will accommodate people in all employment activities, including the recruitment process, based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g. disability, religion, etc.).
- The ministry will accommodate employees in a timely matter and management will work with employees to identify and remove any barriers that will keep an employee, or prospective employee, from participating equally in all aspects of employment.
- During the recruitment process, people with disabilities will be provided with: alternate formats for written materials, physical adjustments (chairs, workstations, keyboards, etc.) and technical aids/assistive devices.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:

To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Planning Team will continue to solicit input from Human Resources Practitioners for identifying and preventing employment barriers.

Planned Action(s):

The Accessibility Planning Team will include representation from the HR Community.

Implementation Timeline: November 2008 – March 2009

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008: To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Future Manager Procurement Training/learning programs will include information about barrier-free accessibility in procurement activities.

Planned Action(s):

Training/learning programs will continue to include information about barrier-free accessibility and procurement activities.

Implementation Timeline:

Additional sessions for new managers and staff will be scheduled January 2009 – March 2010.

Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008:

Procurement sessions for managers, supervisors and staff were held during 2007/2008.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In order to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities through information sharing and skill development of ministry employees, the ministry will:

- Include a learning component regarding accessibility for all divisional conferences and annual training events; and
- Incorporate accessibility awareness into staff orientation.

Planned Action(s):

Accessibility awareness has been incorporated into the new staff orientation sessions. In 2009 the Accessibility Planning Team will develop a learning component regarding accessibility for all divisional conferences and annual training events.

Implementation Timeline: January 2009 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008:

To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Policy & Program

Commitment: New

Facilities, policies and practices will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to identify and remove (or prevent) barriers to employment and ensure every employee is able to achieve his or her full potential.

Planned Action(s):

This is a new priority in the ministry. Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force. The Ministry's Corporate Services Division will play an active role in the development of the new Employment Accommodation Standard and participate in the Employee Accommodation-Standards Development Committee (EA-SDC).

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:

This is an ongoing practice in the ministry supported by the Corporate Service Division.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry will continue its best practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. Our services provider is sensitive to the ergonomic needs of disabled employees.

Planned Action(s):

Ministry employees receive full ergonomic assessment of their workplace upon being hired, at which time appropriate action is taken. Ergonomic assessments are also available to all staff to accommodate changes that may be required for the staff's accommodation needs.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007 – 2008:

To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation**Impact:** Service**Commitment:** Ongoing

Accommodating staff for a broad range of disabilities will be a priority.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to accommodate staff for a broad range of disabilities on a priority basis. Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodations Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010**Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:**

In order to accommodate people with a broad range of disabilities, the ministry's human resources branch shared interview questions with candidates before interviews. Candidates were also asked prior to the interview if they required additional accommodation.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation**Impact:** Program & Service**Commitment:** Ongoing

To increase staff's awareness about the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* and accessibility issues in general.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry's Corporate Service Division will undertake a further review of this commitment once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force. Additional information will be included on the ministry intranet site as well as orientation manuals. This will be done to ensure greater awareness and knowledge of how to accommodate visitors/clients/staff with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010**Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:**

The accessibility e-courses were promoted to all ministry staff.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Program

Commitment: New

Communications to include a dedicated Accessibility ministry intranet website on the updated ministry intranet.

Planned Action(s):

The Accessibility Planning Team in partnership with Communications Branch will update the accessibility content on the ministry intranet site for all staff to access. A dedicated ministry intranet webpage will be created to increase staff's knowledge and awareness on accessibility. The webpage will include the ministry's accessibility plans as well as other resources, tools, tips and information – including how to choose correct terminology when talking about disabilities, how to plan accessible meetings and a link to accessibility e-courses. Further review on this commitment will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007 – 2008: To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

MRI will work with Publications Ontario in providing ministry publications in alternate formats.

Planned Action(s):

On request, ministry publications are available in alternate formats. The ministry will track the number of publication requests provided in alternate formats.

Implementation Timeline: November 2008 – March 2009

Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008: To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

MRI will provide on-going subject matter expertise, quality assurance measures and consultation to ministry staff on AODA issues associated with Information and Information Technology (I&IT).

Planned Action(s):

Ministry to schedule accessibility information lunch and learn sessions for staff. The ministry will strive to enquire and include accessible information technology for ministry meetings/events and report back on ministry progress.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007 – 2008:

Ministry co-hosted a lunch and learn session “Accessibility in our Communities and within our Workplaces”, which included information to increase staff awareness and understanding on the importance of making events/meetings accessible and provided participants with information about support systems for different disabilities in our communities. Progress to be reported on in next year’s Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Communications to staff regarding accessibility planning.

Commitment: Ongoing

Annual accessibility Plan is posted on the ministry website. Also, the Accessibility Team will work closely with the Webmaster to organize the intranet site containing useful information, frequently asked questions, and a contact name and telephone number.

Planned Action(s):

Accessibility Team Lead and Webmaster work jointly to accomplish commitments.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

Accessibility Team Lead and Webmaster are working together to organize the intranet site with Accessibility information. The Accessibility Lead contact information will be included as the ministry accessibility contact on the new ministry intranet webpage.

Focus Area: Communications and Information**Impact:** Service**Commitment:** Complete

The Ministry Intranet website to be used as a central repository on information on accessibility – including frequently asked questions and contact names and telephone numbers.

Planned Action(s):

Communications Branch to update the MRI intranet site to include accessibility information.

Implementation Timeline: September 2007 – November 2008**Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008:**

The MRI Intranet site does include links to accessibility information includes:

- MRI Intranet Resources:
Links to IT Services/Resources, that includes an Accessibility Planning section:
(Economic Development and Trade)
- MRI Intranet Employee Toolbox:
Links to Additional Resources, that includes The Accessibility Plan 2007/08
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Every page on the Intranet website, including the home page has a button at the bottom of the right column called: "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act," that links to Accessibility Planning Under the ODA:
(Ministry of Community and Social Services)

Focus Area: Communications and Information**Impact:** Regulation**Commitment:** Complete

MRI ensures that all MRI maintained Internet and Intranet websites comply with ODA, 2001 (Section 6) requirements.

Planned Action(s):

MRI intranet and internet to comply with the ODA 2001 (Section 6) requirements.

Implementation Timeline: September 2007 – November 2008**Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008:**

The MRI New Media Team has taken all of the necessary steps to ensure that MRI intranet and internet websites comply with ODA, 2001 (Section 6) requirements.

Focus Area: Built Environment**Impact:** Policy and Programs**Commitment:** Ongoing

To allow for any persons with disabilities to work in the ministry, all newly built or renovated spaces will meet or exceed the Ontario Building Code and “Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities” October 2004.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to ensure that all renovated spaces will continue to meet these standards. The Ontario Realty Corporation will be updating the current ORC barrier-free design standards. These standards are expected to meet or exceed the new Built Environment Standard. Further review will be undertaken once the new Built Environment Standard comes into force. The Corporate Services Division will play an active role in the development of the new Built Environment Standard and participate in the Built Environment – Standards Development Committee (BE-SDC).

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010**Results Achieved in 2007-2008:**

The ministry completed renovation on the 18th floor, 56 Wellesley Street West, in Toronto. Accessibility was included as a key design and construction priority in this location.

Focus Area: Built Environment**Impact:** Policy & Program**Commitment:** Ongoing

All workspaces will be designed and equipped to accommodate employees with a wide range of disabilities and/or functional limitations.

Planned Action:

This is an ongoing priority in the ministry. Further review will be undertaken once the Built Environment Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010**Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:** This is an ongoing activity in the ministry.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

To ensure, where feasible, that all ministry locations are accessible to staff, clients and the public.

Planned Action:

The ministry's Corporate Services Division will continue to review this issue on an ongoing basis. Further review will be undertaken once the Built Environment Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008- March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

A review was undertaken and it was confirmed that all ministry locations, where feasible, were in compliance.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In assessing its emergency evacuation plans the ministry will:

- Take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities at all levels of their planning and response activities, and actively involve members of this community in planning efforts.
- Raise the awareness of people with disabilities of what they can do to prepare for their own safety and survival during times of evacuation.

Planned Action:

The ministry Accessibility Planning Team working with the ministry Emergency Management Coordinator will provide regular reminders/updates to staff regarding emergency evacuation policies and procedures.

Implementation Action: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: To be reported on in next year's ODA Plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Regulation

Commitment: Complete

Ensure that any construction related to ministry expansion to the 18th floor, 56 Wellesley Street West meets or exceeds Ontario Building Code requirements.

Planned Action(s): Construction and renovations for a new branch in the ministry.

Implementation Timeline: August 2007 - September 2007

Results Achieved in 2007 - 2008: Staff moved to the new location mid September 2007.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts and Regulations

Commitment: Ongoing

The impact, if any, of new and amended acts or regulations on our facilities, policies, programs, practices and services will be tracked and reported on throughout the year.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts and regulations. The ministry Legal Branch will appoint a counsel to periodically advise program staff responsible for accessibility (as identified by corporate services) changes to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

This is an ongoing practice. The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review or going forward include accessibility as part of the review process.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts and Regulations

Commitment: Ongoing

To continue to remain current in our knowledge of accessibility-related legislation, regulations, standards and best practices and effectively apply those to our business and employment practices.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review, or going forward, include accessibility as part of the review process.

Other

Impact: Policy & Service

Commitments: New

To ensure the ministry delivers on new and ongoing accessibility commitments, the ministry will develop an accessibility tracking system to track yearly progress on ministry commitments.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry Accessibility Planning Team will develop an online tracking system and provide quarterly updates/reports to senior management to keep them apprised of our progress on meeting the accessibility commitments.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:

To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Other

Impact: Policy & Service

Commitments: New

To ensure staff awareness of *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements, and the importance of accessibility planning as part of the annual business cycle. To provide meaningful input into the annual planning process.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry Access Planning Team will continue to ensure that staff are provided with enhanced knowledge and awareness of the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* and other relevant requirements, the importance of accessibility planning as part of the annual business cycle, and given the opportunity to provide meaningful input into the process and the plan. They will also provide new employees with an orientation on accessibility and accessibility planning requirements.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved in 2007- 2008:

To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-325-5181

TTY number: 800-387-5559

Toll Free number: 866-446-5216

E-mail: info@mri.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.ontario.ca/innovation

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

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Toronto ON M5G 2C8

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