



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD
and RURAL AFFAIRS**

**2011-2012
ODA Accessibility Plan**

ISSN # 1710-291X

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2010-11	2
Customer Service.....	2
Information and Communications	3
Employment.....	4
Transportation.....	4
Built Environment	4
Procurement	4
Other	5
Section Two: Measures Planned for 2011-12 and Beyond	6
Customer Service.....	6
Information and Communications	6
Employment.....	7
Built Environment	7
Procurement	8
Other	8
Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies	9
Glossary of Terms/Acronyms.....	10
For More Information	11

Introduction

Each year, the Government of Ontario sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through its annual accessibility plans, as required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is Ontario's roadmap to become barrier-free by 2025. It includes accessibility standards in:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Built Environment

This year the accessibility plans will help to inform planning requirements under the new Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) enacted last summer under the AODA. The IAS requires the Government of Ontario to develop a multi-year plan to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Our annual accessibility plan outlines the specific steps the government is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Building on last year's plan, our 2011-12 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs toward the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

To view other ministries' Accessibility Plans, visit Ontario.ca.

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2010-11

The Government of Ontario is working to achieve an accessible province by 2025.

In 2010-11, the government continued to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation and continued to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas: employment, information and communication, transportation, the built environment and procurement.

This document includes a summary of the initiatives the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs implemented in 2010-11.

Customer Service

OMAFRA is committed to ensuring that staff and clients with disabilities obtain accessible goods and services with the same quality and timeliness which others receive. The ministry took a leadership role in adopting the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation by January 1, 2010 and it continues to maintain this high standard with its ongoing compliance. In 2010-11 our ministry made the following advancements in the areas of Accessible Customer Service:

- OMAFRA maintained full, ongoing compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation and associated Ontario Public Service (OPS) Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- Stakeholder outreach activities were conducted in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. OMAFRA created a series of notices to inform stakeholders of their new responsibilities in the area of accessible customer service as of January 1, 2012. This message was delivered to thousands of stakeholders in the agri-food and rural sectors. Notices were included in program area publications to further embed accessibility across all areas of the ministry.
- Ongoing, mandatory accessible customer service training was required of all new staff and management, not only frontline service providers as required by the AODA. Staff are informed of the training requirement through orientation documents and were required to complete the training within three months of hire. The status of staff training is monitored and tracked to ensure a minimum of 90%, or more, of staff are fully trained at all times.
- Staff training and resources were provided on how to apply the concepts of the Inclusion Lens, an analytical tool developed by the OPS Diversity Office. The purpose of this tool is to ensure the principles of accessibility are consistently applied in the development of new initiatives and in reviewing existing human resources and general business-related policies and procedures.

- Various feedback channels and methods were available for clients and staff to provide feedback on accessible customer service including the use of surveys and evaluations for internal clients and the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback. Response mechanisms were also put in place to ensure feedback received on accessibility related matters continues to inform continuous improvements to the way the ministry conducts its business. Feedback was collected, reviewed and analysed to identify trends and potential gaps in customer service and appropriate actions were taken in response. The following are examples of the feedback that was received, and how that feedback has led to improvements in customer service.

Feedback: A third-party service provider requested information on the appropriate use of font and background colors on website content.

Response: An I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence information resource was shared on how to create and update web pages to improve accessibility.

Feedback: OMAFRA summer students were asked to provide feedback through a survey on the effectiveness of the accessible customer service training they received. Overall, the respondents indicated that the accessible customer service training increased their knowledge and confidence in serving people with disabilities. Comments suggested that the training could be more interactive for future students to test their own knowledge.

Response: OMAFRA-specific training will be re-designed to be more interactive with questions to be answered after each section. Enhancements will benefit students new to the ministry in summer 2012.

To build on existing feedback channels, OMAFRA has required that third party service providers, who conduct training on behalf of the ministry, build accessibility considerations into their evaluations and surveys and report results back to the ministry. See Accessible Procurement on page 4 for more information.

Information and Communications

- OMAFRA implemented enhanced accessibility features through the launch of the Online Design Program (ODP) on April 9th, 2011. The ODP outlines a common look and feel for all Ontario ministry websites as directed by Cabinet Office Communications. These features were extended to our online applications including “The List of Agriculture and Rural Organizations” and “Agriphones” tools.
- Communications Branch continued to train and coach new staff and summer students in the proper use of Dreamweaver to ensure the accessibility of OMAFRA’s web-based resources.
- As part of OMAFRA’s accessibility awareness plan, the ministry encouraged staff to take the “Agent Access” series of on-line training developed by the Diversity Office. This training series teaches participants how to create accessible

documents and increases knowledge of the production of literature in different formats.

- OMAFRA continued to communicate and remind staff of best practices when sending PDF documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility.
- Access Awareness Week activities included a learning session on “Information and Communications: Accessible Formats”.

Employment

- Interview questions and assignments were reviewed to remove potential barriers and to implement the usage of plain language.
- Job advertisements were shared as appropriate including open competitions.

Transportation

- This standard has been reviewed for implications to OMAFRA or its external stakeholders. OMAFRA does not anticipate any impacts from the requirements under the transportation standard as they relate specifically to public transportation and the transportation sector.

Built Environment

- An accessible and ergonomic office layout was incorporated into the design of OMAFRA’s newly constructed office in Downsview. All workstations and kitchenettes will be designed in accordance with the OPS Barrier Free Design Guidelines and reflect current industry standards for ergonomic design.
- Accessibility improvements also included the installation of additional automated door openers to washrooms in the ministry’s Guelph location.

Procurement

- Accessible and inclusive goods and services were delivered consistent with the accessibility legislation.
- Accessible procurement contract language was included in competitive documents to remind staff of the requirement in the planning stage.
- An AODA section was included in the new Procurement Directive training to strengthen staff awareness of accessibility requirements.
- Ministry staff were supported in developing ministry procurement documentation by incorporating accessibility language into deliverables such as; proof the vendor completed the AODA training available on Ministry of Community and Social Services AODA website and if facilitating training sessions on behalf of the ministry, including an AODA satisfaction question in the attendee evaluation.
- Proposals were evaluated using accessibility criteria such as demonstrated experience.
- An AODA tip sheet was developed to encourage staff to build accessibility into their procurements.

Other

OMAFRA has an Accessibility Awareness Plan that includes education and outreach activities aimed to build broad accessibility awareness among staff, agencies and stakeholders.

In addition to the education and outreach activities listed under their specific categories above, our ministry increased awareness by:

- Promoting the OPS Accessibility Expo held in Toronto on December 1st, 2011 and by making resources and web-conferencing available for staff who could not attend in person.
- Hosting the third annual Southwest Accessibility Expo in February 2012 with the goal of continuing to build broad accessibility awareness. This event builds on the OPS Accessibility Expo and is aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness in all of the key accessibility focus areas collectively. It also aims to raise awareness about the standards within the new Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2011-12 and Beyond

This year, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' accessibility plan focuses on 4 areas. These initiatives will support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. They will also help us enhance accessibility in other areas:

- Employment
- Information & Communications
- The Built Environment
- Procurement

Customer Service

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities receive accessible goods and services from us. This means they will receive goods and services with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

- OMAFRA will continue to maintain compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensure all new staff and management receive training in accessible customer service by including the requirement in orientation processes, and by tracking and monitoring progress on this throughout the year to maintain 90%, or more, of staff with accessibility training at any given time.
- Continue to post notices of temporary service disruptions in a timely manner and identify alternatives available throughout the disruption consistent with the Service Disruption Protocol developed by the OPS Diversity Office
- Ask for feedback about accessibility and take appropriate action to ensure continuous improvement to the way the ministry conducts its business.
- Provide timely access to documents in accessible formats, as required by the legislation, through further education and resources on how to create accessible source documents.

Timeframe – Ongoing 2011- 2012

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our programs and services to the public.

- The ministry will be reviewing accessibility best practices and guidelines for social media. We will be informing staff and program areas of the requirements for accessibility when they are using various social media tools.
- Continue to communicate best practices when sending PDF documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility.
- Conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA for any new internet or intranet websites and web content on those sites.

Timeframe: December 2011 – December 2012

Employment

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities.

- Emergency procedures for persons with disabilities will continue to be communicated to staff as part of the ministry's accessibility awareness plan.
- Annual emergency evacuation training will include training on evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities.
- The effectiveness of our evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities will be tested annually through simulations that directly involve persons with disabilities.
- Individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to existing and new staff who require them in compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards. With employee's permission, managers will be asked to identify staff requiring accommodation. Appropriate materials will then be developed for staff requiring them.

Timeframe: December 2011- December 2012

Built Environment

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings we use.

- An accessible and ergonomic office layout will be incorporated into the design layout for the Stratford office relocation in May 2012.
- Accessibility improvements will be made in the Toronto-Grenville office by adding three automated door openers to the 10th floor entry doors.
- The Toronto-Grenville retrofit project will incorporate accessibility and ergonomic designs into the new layout in March 2012.

Existing OMAFRA facilities will be reviewed to identify accessibility barriers. A plan to prioritize and implement changes through a phased approach will be documented by March 2012.

Timeframe: December 2011 – December 2012

Procurement

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to integrating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes.

- Improved accessibility language within the procurement competitive documentation under the deliverables and rated criteria sections.
- Additional accessible procurement resources for staff will be made available on the ministry's intra-net web site.
- Examples will be provided to assist staff with incorporating OPS Diversity Office information such as accessibility language for procurements into documentation.

Timeframe: December 2011 – December 2012

Other

- Accessibility, as part of overall diversity and inclusion, will be incorporated into criteria for OMAFRA's Bravo award recognitions.

Timeframe: December 2011 – December 2012

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will continue to review government initiatives, including legislation and policies, to identify and remove barriers.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2010-11

Acts and Regulations

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to ensuring that our Acts and regulations are reviewed for potential accessibility barriers.

In April 2011, a group of ministry representatives participated in a training session for multidisciplinary teams from all ministries on how to use the OPS Inclusion Lens to review laws for accessibility barriers. Going forward, the OPS Diversity Office and the Ministry of the Attorney General are working together to support a coordinated approach to legislative review across government.

Inclusion Lens

In 2011, the Ontario Public Service launched the Inclusion Lens. The Lens is an innovative tool to help address diversity and accessibility. With this tool, ministries can identify and address potential barriers to people with disabilities, and others that may be present in existing or proposed legislation, policies, programs, practices or services.

In 2010-11, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs ensured that a multidisciplinary team attended the one-day training session on using the Inclusion Lens to review legislation for barriers to persons with disabilities.

In the future, our ministry will continue to promote training on the use of the Inclusion Lens through education and outreach activities.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

ACS – Accessible Customer Service

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act

ODP – Online Design Program

OMAFRA – Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

OPS – Ontario Public Service

TTY – Telephone Teletype

WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please contact:

General inquiry number: 519-826-3100

TTY number: 519-826-7402

Toll-free number: 1-877-424-1300

E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

Field Code Changed

Ministry website address: www.omafra.gov.on.ca

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](#) web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

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

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

TTY: 1-800-268-7095

© Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN # 1710-291X

Ce document est disponible en français.