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Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

2004-2005 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

Message from Minister



Hon. Dalton McGuinty

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs' 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan.

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs is committed to meeting its obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and is pursuing a number of initiatives to address its responsibilities. This report identifies the ministry's recent achievements and outlines commitments and strategies for going forward.

Many actions focus on internal operations and practices. These include identifying and removing physical and communications barriers for both visitors and staff with disabilities, as well as ensuring staff have sufficient training to provide appropriate service to people with disabilities.

The government is working to build strong and liveable communities that offer a high quality of life for Ontarians of all abilities. This fall, the government will introduce measures to make the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) strong and effective. We are committed to working with Ontarians with disabilities so they can fully participate in building a stronger province.

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs (MIA) accessibility planning team met regularly throughout 2003 – 2004 to address accessibility issues. The team's mandate is to identify, remove and prevent barriers within the ministry to people with disabilities. In carrying out its mandate during the past year, the team worked closely with MIA's senior management, other ministry staff and representatives from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's accessibility directorate.

The following describes MIA's commitments and achievements from its 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan.

■ ***Commitment***

Conduct audits of the ministry's (1) physical space; (2) recruitment policies; and (3) customer service practices to identify possible physical and communications barriers for people with disabilities.

Status

Complete

■ ***Commitment***

Following the audit of the ministry's physical space, develop a remedial work plan to address barriers identified in the audit.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

The ministry's human resources branch will review processes for employment competitions to identify areas for improvement in quality service and accommodation for people with disabilities.

Status

Complete

■ **Commitment**

Provide ministry staff with awareness-training in understanding and identifying the broad range of barriers so that staff understand the meaning of "disability" as defined under the ODA.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Ensure ministry staff take suitable accessibility / disability-awareness training on how to provide sensitive and appropriate service to people with disabilities.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Ensure all new managers and supervisors at the ministry complete on-line training on accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Incorporate appropriate questions about accessibility issues in the ministry's annual employee survey.

Status

Complete

■ **Commitment**

Ensure ministry staff with responsibility for procurement are provided with the Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, once the guidelines are distributed by Management Board Secretariat.

Status

In progress

Action and Timeframe:

Ongoing

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government's recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

■ **Commitment**

Continue to ensure the ministry's Internet site is accessible, including the testing of all new content.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Ensure the planned redesign of the ministry's intranet site makes it accessible to people with disabilities.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Ensure the ministry's website coordinator becomes proficient with accessible website design and adaptive technologies.

Status

Complete and ongoing

■ **Commitment**

Provide appropriate ministry staff with guidance on the procedures for responding to requests for publications in accessible formats.

Status

Complete and ongoing

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

During the coming year, MIA's accessibility team will continue to monitor accessibility issues and implement the ministry's accessibility plan.

The following describes MIA's commitments, actions and timeframes for 2004 - 2005 to identify, remove and prevent barriers within the ministry to people with disabilities.

Legislative Requirements

■ **Commitment**

MIA will implement "year one" of a multi-year action plan to remove the existing barriers that were identified in the 2003 - 2004 audit of the ministry's physical space.

Action:

Address / take action on 25 per cent of the "priority" items identified in the remedial work plan produced following the audit of the ministry's physical space.

Timeframe:

Ongoing until March 2005

■ **Commitment**

MIA will implement the new barrier-free design guidelines, once they are released by the Ontario Realty Corporation.

Action:

The ministry's accessibility team will review the new guidelines and MIA's existing remedial work plan (produced following the audit of the ministry's physical space), and revise the work plan as necessary.

Timeframe:

Implementation ongoing in 2004-2005 upon release of the guidelines by Ontario Realty Corporation.

■ ***Commitment***

Ministry staff continue to consider accessibility as part of the procurement process. Formal processes and training will be communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Action:

All staff with responsibility for procurement of goods and services will receive training based on the guidelines.

Timeframe:

2004-2005

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will continue to ensure that the ministry's Internet site is accessible to people with disabilities.

Action:

Test all content for accessibility.

Timeframe:

(1) When new material is added to the Internet. (2) Complete site will be reviewed annually for accessibility in January.

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will continue to provide guidance to ministry staff about the procedures for responding to requests for publications in accessible formats.

Action:

The ministry's communications staff will draft written procedures for responding to requests for publications in accessible formats and add them to the ministry's

communications procedures manual. Procedures will be shared (via ministry-wide email) with the ministry's administration and policy staff and posted on the ministry's intranet.

Timeframe:

September 2004

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will continue to ensure that the ministry's management properly addresses the accommodation needs of employees and job applicants.

Action:

All new managers and supervisors at the ministry will complete training on accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

Timeframe:

Within three months of joining the ministry, new managers and supervisors will undertake training, unless they have already taken the training elsewhere in the Ontario Public Service.

Acts and Regulations

Not applicable to MIA. (The ministry has only one act, the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs Act. It describes the ministry's mandate and the roles and responsibilities of the minister.)

Policies

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will continue to ensure that its human resources branch accommodates job applicants with disabilities.

Action:

The ministry's human resources branch will review processes for employment competitions to identify areas for improvement in quality service and accommodation for people with disabilities.

Timeframe:

January 2005

Programs and Services

Not applicable to MIA. (The key business of the ministry is to provide strategic intergovernmental advice to the Ontario government to advance Ontario's interests in relations with the federal government, other provinces and territories, and other governments outside of Canada. It does not provide public programs and services.)

Practices

■ ***Commitment***

"Accessibility awareness" will be incorporated into the ministry's staff orientation.

Action:

The ministry's communications staff will develop a component about accessibility awareness and add it to the "Inside MIA" section of the ministry's intranet.

Timeframe:

October 2004

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will ensure all branches and employees have the opportunity to provide input to the ministry's accessibility planning.

Action:

(1) MIA's accessibility team will be expanded to include a representative from each of the ministry's branches.

(2) The ministry's annual employee survey will include appropriate questions and / or statements about accessibility and accommodation issues.

Timeframe:

(1) October 2004

(2) March 2005

■ ***Commitment***

MIA will build on existing procedures to improve emergency evacuation procedures

for people with disabilities at all ministry locations.

Action:

MIA will review existing emergency evacuation procedures and revise them as necessary to ensure specific emergency evacuation procedures are in place for people with disabilities.

Timeframe:

October 2004

For more information

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

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Ministry Web site address: www.mia.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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