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Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

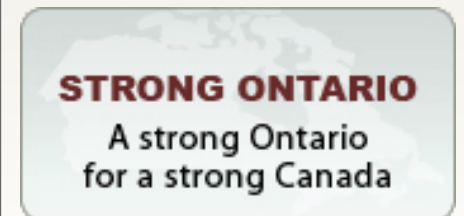
2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

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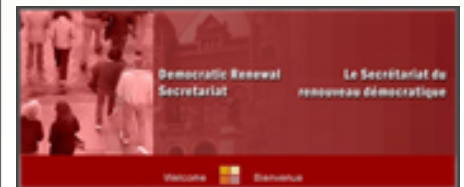
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Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and

the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-06 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-07 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends 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 of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

Message from Minister

The Honourable Dr. Marie Bountrogianni

It is my pleasure to present the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs 2006-07 Accessibility Plan, and to share the many successes we have celebrated this past year in working towards the government's goal for an inclusive and accessible Ontario.

As the former Minister for Citizenship, I had the privilege of being involved in the passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which marks its first anniversary this year. This landmark legislation will foster the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

To commemorate this milestone, the Government of Ontario recently announced that three new accessibility standards will be developed, in the areas of communications and information, the built environment and employment. This

is in addition to two standards already being developed, which deal with customer service and transportation.

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs (MIA) is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

Here at MIA, we are building on the success of our previous three plans and continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with this ministry, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public or ministry stakeholders.

This ministry continues to work to raise awareness and better educate staff on accessibility. In fact, we have achieved 100 per cent accessibility training for management and procurement staff. More examples of our achievements at MIA are provided in the pages that follow, as well as our commitments and strategies for the year ahead.

If you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you to submit them using the contact information located at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Dr. Marie Bountrogianni
Minister

Report on Achievements 2005 - 2006
Accessibility Improvement
Initiatives

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs (MIA) is pleased to report on its progress and continued improvement in making the ministry's events, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. MIA ensured that people with disabilities had easy access to its information and events, whenever possible. It provided an accessible workplace to employees and continued to raise awareness of accessibility issues among ministry managers and staff. MIA's report on its 2005-2006 commitments includes the ministry's accomplishments and ongoing commitments.

Commitment MIA will implement "phase two" of its existing multi-year

remedial action plan to remove the existing barriers that were identified in the 2003-2004 audit of the ministry's physical space. (Phase one covered the period 2004-2005. Phase two, according to the remedial action plan produced as part of the audit, begins in 2005-2006 and continues for a maximum of three years to 2007-2008.)

Status Complete and ongoing

Action MIA reviewed all priorities identified in phase two of the remedial action plan; recommended specific priorities to be addressed in 2005-2006; and implemented actions such as installing an additional automatic door opener, addressing signage issues and replacing individual offices door knobs with lever style handles at the ministry's old office at 900 Bay Street (in December 2005, the ministry moved to a new location at 77 Wellesley Street).

Timeframe October 2005 through March 2006

Commitment The ministry will continue to implement the Ontario Realty Corporation's standards for barrier-free design of Ontario government facilities and ensure that its workspace is as accessible as possible

Status Complete and ongoing

Action MIA's accessibility planning team ensured the Standards for Barrier-Free Design were followed in any renovation or construction of ministry office space. New measures were taken to ensure the ministry's new location at 77 Wellesley was retrofitted to comply with these standards. They include adjusting hallway spacing, addressing signage issues and installing automatic door opener. All new constructions followed the Standards for Barrier-Free Design.

Timeframe Ongoing in 2005-2006.

Commitment MIA will continue its commitment to OPS procurement guidelines to ensure that accessibility has been considered in the procurement of goods and services.

Status Complete and ongoing

Action New procurement staff at the ministry were provided with accessibility guidelines and appropriate training.

Timeframe Ongoing in 2005-2006 as new procurement staff joined the ministry.

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

Status Complete and ongoing

Action All new content was tested for accessibility and was found to be accessible. In addition, MIA participated in the government's GO WEB committee and explored options to broaden accessibility.

Timeframe Ongoing in 2005-2006

Commitment Membership in MIA's accessibility planning team will be expanded to include broader representation from the ministry.

Status Complete

Action Two additional staff were added to MIA's accessibility planning team: the ministry's Corporate Projects Coordinator and a second representative from MIA's Communications Branch.

Timeframe October 2005.

Commitment MIA will continue its commitment to ensure that the ministry's management properly

addresses the accommodation needs of employees and job applicants.

Status Complete and ongoing

Action All new managers and supervisors at the ministry received information and completed training on accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

Timeframe 2005-2006

Commitment MIA will continue to ensure that the ministry's human resources branch accommodates job applicants with disabilities.

Status Complete and ongoing

Action The ministry's human resources branch continued to regularly review employment competitions processes to identify areas for improvement in quality service and accommodation for people with disabilities and to ensure that no barriers were inadvertently included.

Timeframe Ongoing in 2005-2006.

Commitment MIA will continue to promote "accessibility awareness" to all staff throughout the ministry.

Status Complete and ongoing

Action MIA posted a component on “accessibility awareness” on the ministry's intranet. In addition, following on the success of accessibility training workshops presented to MIA staff in 2003-2004, it was decided that similar presentations would be incorporated to the ministry's regular lunch and learn series. The next presentation is scheduled for the fall of 2006.

Timeframe Intranet component on accessibility awareness: spring 2006

Staff presentations: fall 2006

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

Status Complete and ongoing

Action In addition to expanding MIA's accessibility planning team by adding the ministry's Corporate Projects Coordinator and a second representative from MIA's Communications Branch, the ministry added a feedback function to its intranet to allow staff to share their comments and questions about accessibility issues.

Timeframe Expansion of MIA's accessibility planning team: October 2005, MIA's accessibility feedback function: June 2006.

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

Status Complete and ongoing

Action The ministry's communications staff reviewed existing procedures for responding to requests for publications in accessible formats and updated them as necessary. Relevant staff were informed of these procedures.

Timeframe November 2005.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs (MIA) established an accessibility planning group in 2004. Its mandate is to identify, remove and prevent barriers within the ministry to people with disabilities. The group continues to review and refine its commitment to accessibility on a regular basis. The

following section reports on the planning group's progress in meeting its mandate.

Commitment The ministry's accessibility planning group will continue to monitor the implementation of the accessibility plan and report to the ministry's senior management team. MIA's accessibility plan was posted on the ministry's website at www.mia.gov.on.ca .

Status Complete and ongoing

Action The working group met to monitor the plan and reported regularly to the Assistant Deputy Minister. The group will continue to meet to review existing commitments and monitor the implementation of the accessibility plan and will report to its Executive Lead.

Commitment The ministry will continue to ensure that, where possible, activities involving members of the public are held in barrier-free venues.

Status Complete and ongoing

Action The ministry ensured activities involving members of the public, such as *Competing for Tomorrow Summit: A Postsecondary Education and Skills Summit*, were held in barrier-free

venues.

The ministry continues to incorporate accessibility considerations into its selection criteria and plans activities in accordance with the government's "Planning for Accessibility Meetings" guide.

Timeframe This commitment was completed for 2005-06 as event planning occurred and will continue to be a major consideration in future planning.

Commitments - Measures to Prevent New Barriers

For 2006-2007, the ministry identified barriers to accessibility in four key areas. MIA commits to review these barriers, determine their impact on accessibility for persons with disabilities and address them. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Barrier MIA staff require access to information on how to accommodate customers with disabilities

Commitment A component on accommodating the needs of customers with disabilities will be posted on MIA's intranet to increase ministry staff "accessibility awareness" and provide them with the information they require

to provide accessible services.

Responsibility The Communications Branch

Timeline March 2007

Employment accommodation

Barrier The ministry requires a “go-to” person that staff could contact regarding their accessibility needs.

Commitment The ministry’s Corporate Projects Coordinator will be designated as the contact person for accessibility issues. This information will be made available to staff through MIA’s intranet.

Responsibility The Communications Branch and the Strategic Intergovernmental Advice Office

Timeline November 2006

Communications and information

Barrier Persons with disabilities cannot access the Consular Corps list posted on the ministry’s internet since it’s not available in an accessible format,

Commitment MIA’s communications branch will work to make the Consular Corps list available in an accessible format.

Responsibility The Communications Branch

Timeline December 2006

Built environment

Barrier Most individual offices at the ministry's 77 Wellesley location have door knobs, which cannot be used easily by persons with disabilities.

Commitment MIA will replace the door knobs with lever handle style that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Responsibility The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Timeline March 2007

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.)

Other barriers

The ministry will involve staff through a feedback function on its intranet. This function will allow staff to provide input on possible barriers to successfully

meet our commitments to
provide accessibility for persons
with disabilities.

***Commitments — Barriers to
be Addressed***

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identified barriers to accessibility
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For more information

Questions or comments about the

ministry's accessibility plan are
always welcome.

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Ministry website address: [www.
mia.gov.on.ca](http://www.mia.gov.on.ca)

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

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