

MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

*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 Accessibility 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 Municipal Affairs and Housing's sixth 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.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has a major role in implementing the AODA. In particular, the ministry acts as the lead for the Accessible Built Environment Standard Development Committee, which began meeting in the fall of 2007. This involves providing technical advice to the Standard Development Committee and coordinating the Interministerial Committee involvement on this standard. The 2006 Building Code contains enhanced barrier-free accessibility requirements, which we expect to be expanded and built upon once the committee has developed a standard and submitted it to the government for consideration.

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.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

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

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will follow the corporate policy and guidelines on accessibility, once developed, and assist identified program areas to implement the Customer Service Training in the ministry.

Planned Action(s):

- a) The ministry will identify:
 - o Program areas that have public contacts that require customer service training, e.g. "May I Help You" e-learning module
 - o Program areas that develop policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public
- b) The ministry will roll out the training program to employees identified for the customer service training in the identified program areas
- c) The ministry will enhance manager and employee awareness of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by:
 - o Including in the agenda of the ministry's Orientation program
 - o Including the document in the New Employee Orientation Website and New Manager Orientation Guide
 - o Communicating the New Standards to all current managers

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: To be reported on in next year's ODA plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New and ongoing

The Landlord and Tenant Board will train staff and Members of the Board about the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard as set out in the Customer Service Regulation under the AODA.

Planned Action(s):

Most Board staff and Members have already completed Part 1 of the Center for Leadership and Learning's "May I Help You" e-learning module. As more modules dealing with accessibility issues become available, Board staff and Members will be expected to complete them.

Training on accessibility requirements and the Board's accessibility policies, procedures and practices will also be integrated into staff and Member training and workshop sessions, and at various staff meetings that are held regularly by the Board.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New and ongoing

The Landlord and Tenant Board will review, formalize and codify its policies, practices, and procedures on accessibility as required by the Customer Service Regulation under the AODA.

Planned Action(s):

The Board currently has a number of policies, procedures and practices that deal with accessibility issues. The Board will be reviewing these over the scope of this plan, and will also be developing and implementing additional ones.

Along with this, the Board will be codifying these policies, procedures and practices into documents which will be available to the public as required by the Customer Service Regulation under the AODA.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service & Built Environment

Commitment: New and ongoing

The ministry accommodates and addresses the particular needs of Building Code examination candidates with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry plans to continue the policy of accommodating the needs of Building Code examination candidates with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry effectively delivers Building Code examinations to examination candidates with disabilities.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Act Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue the review of potential regulatory amendments to the Building Code that would enhance barrier-free access to buildings.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry has actively consulted on the Building Code, including accessibility issues. MMAH is working with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) to support the work of the Accessible Built Environment Standard Development Committee (ABE-SDC), which is developing an accessible built environment standard. MMAH is the lead ministry in the development of this standard, which is part of the implementation of the AODA. The ABE-SDC is developing a standard to enhance the barrier-free access to the built environment, including buildings. The work of the committee began in fall 2007 and is expected to last until Spring 2009. The committee will make recommendations to the government for regulatory changes. It is anticipated that changes to the barrier-free requirements for buildings would be incorporated into the Building Code, either as amendments to the current edition or as part of the next edition, anticipated in 2011.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – July 2011

Results Achieved:

The ministry is supporting the ABE-SDC by providing technical advice on the accessibility provisions of the 2006 Building Code and by reviewing the work of the ABE-SDC with respect to technical viability, enforceability and impact.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry provides training and examines building practitioners on the barrier-free provisions of the Building Code.

Planned Action(s):

The Building Code requires building practitioners, including building officials and designers, to pass examinations that evaluate their knowledge of the Building Code within their area of practice, including barrier-free access provisions. The ministry has developed training aids targeted at helping building practitioners prepare for these examinations. Courses are available through ministry delivery agents and contain specific content on barrier-free requirements. Pursuant to the 2011 Code update, new training material will be developed, which will address the AODA Code changes.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry is continuing its commitment to Building Code technical training and examinations, including evaluating knowledge on barrier-free access provisions. The Large Buildings and Small Buildings training courses, which include many accessibility provisions, have been updated to the 2006 Building Code.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Fall 2008

The ministry will continue to update the examinations written by building practitioners to reflect the new content of the 2006 Building Code, including barrier-free access provisions.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry is in the final stages of this update and anticipates that the new examinations will be available in late Fall 2008. New practitioners and those expanding their area of practice will be required to take the new examinations effective Spring 2009. Pursuant to the 2011 Code update, new exams will be developed, which will address the AODA Code changes.

Implementation Timeframe: Fall 2008

Results Achieved:

The ministry posted draft examination syllabi for technical input and comment until October 10, 2008. Based on the input received, the final syllabi will give examination candidates the specific description of the areas of the Building Code knowledge covered by the various examinations, including barrier-free access provisions. It is anticipated that the Building Code practitioners will have the option of taking the new examinations in late Fall 2008. New practitioners and those expanding their area of practice will be required to take the new examinations effective Spring 2009

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that the capital grant program project meet the accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to ensure projects funded under the ministry's Affordable Housing program conforms with accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry will continue to ensure projects funded under the ministry's Affordable Housing program conforms with accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will support and monitor the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* standards development process in the area of the built environment specifically in relation to recommendations developed for new housing units created under provincial or municipal housing programs.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will ensure new housing units created under provincial (Affordable Housing Program) or municipal housing programs meet accessibility standards of the Building Code and any new standards developed under the Built Environment Standards Development Committee.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry will continue to support and monitor the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* standards development process.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program

Commitment: New

The ministry will engage the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to clarify issues related to Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities (RRAP-D) funding in Social Housing Agreement projects, in an effort to help more tenants receive needed accessibility modifications.

Planned Action(s):

Engage CMHC and advise Municipal Service Managers who administer RRAP-D funding of any new or clarified position in writing.

Implementation Timeframe: 2008 – 2009

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: New

The ministry will ensure that accessibility for persons with disabilities is considered in the development of Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS).

Planned Action (s):

The development and analysis of policy options for Ontario's LTAHS include consideration for accessibility for people with disabilities and any resulting new policies, programs and regulatory/legislative changes impacting Ontario's affordable and social housing sector.

Implementation Timeframe: 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program

Commitment: New

The ministry will work with Municipal Service Managers to identify status of, and demand for modified units (accessible units for people with physical disabilities) in Ontario's existing social housing stock.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will survey service managers to identify demand for modified units and consider options for regulatory amendments related to Section 5.1 "Accessible Units" of the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*, and/or through the Accessible Built Environment Standards development process.

Implementation Timeframe: 2008 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will be incorporated into all new ministry construction and minor renovations.

Planned Action (s):

The Barrier-Free Design Guidelines were incorporated into the ministry's new construction arising from required space reduction and various minor renovations.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to incorporate the Ontario Realty Corporation's Barrier-Free Design Guidelines into all new construction and minor renovations.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will work with landlords of buildings leased by the ministry to ensure that targeted facilities provide optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will continue to work with landlords of buildings leased by the ministry to ensure that targeted facilities provide optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to work with landlords of buildings leased by the ministry to ensure that targeted facilities provide optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that construction and office redesign in ministry buildings continues to be based on good ergonomic design and in compliance with the Building Code.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will continue to work together with individuals to ensure that their workspaces are based on good ergonomic design and are devoid of any accessibility barriers.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to ensure that construction and office redesign in ministry buildings continues to be based on good ergonomic design and in compliance with the Building Code.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will support the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will provide policy, administrative and technical support to the Accessible Built Environment Standards Development Committee. The committee is developing standards for the physical environment, both indoors and outdoors.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to provide policy, administrative and technical support to the Accessible Built Environment Standards Development Committee.

Focus Area: Built Environment & Information and Communication

Impact: Act (Support material for the *Planning Act*)

Commitment: New

Review and where necessary, update the Plans of Subdivision and Accessibility Information Sheet to reflect recent changes to the *Planning Act* that facilitate accessibility and the enactment of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will review and where necessary, update the Plans of Subdivision and Accessibility Information Sheet to reflect recent changes to the *Planning Act* that facilitate accessibility and the enactment of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Implementation Timeframe: November 2009

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment & Information and Communications

Impact: Policy Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Where possible, all ministry-sponsored public meetings and events will be fully accessible.

Planned Action (s):

Accommodations for persons with disabilities are made available on request for major public meetings.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to provide accommodations for persons with disabilities on request for major public meetings.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Impact: Act

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will review new and existing acts and regulations to identify barriers to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The *Municipal Elections Act* is under review following the 2006 municipal election. Staff have been providing analysis and comments to the Information and Communications Standards Development Committee which is considering recommendations regarding issues involving elections and accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry is represented on "The Steering Committee on Accessible Elections". The Committee has been asked to develop an Action Plan to establish a process to review existing barriers preventing persons with disabilities from fully participating in the electoral process. The Steering Committee is finalizing this work.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: New and Ongoing

The Landlord and Tenant Board will begin reviewing and revising its application forms and application related documents to ensure that they are written in plain language and comply with ODA and AODA requirements.

Planned Action (s):

Under the guidance of an external vendor, and in consultation with its stakeholder groups, the Landlord and Tenant Board will begin reviewing, redrafting and reformatting the Board's application forms and application related documents.

Implementation Timeframe: The timeframe for completion of this project is dependant on the implementation of the Board's new case management system (which is scheduled for the end of the fiscal year).

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: New and Ongoing

The Landlord and Tenant Board will begin the development of an e-filing system which will allow Board clients to file and view applications and application related documents on-line.

Planned Action (s):

Once the Board's new case management system has been implemented and the new forms finalized, the Board will begin work on developing a web-based e-filing system which will allow the Board's clients to file and view applications on-line.

Implementation Timeframe: The timeframe for completion of this project is dependent on the implementation of the Board's new case management system and the finalization of the Board's new forms.

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Where feasible, the ministry will include an electronic component to ministry consultations to allow citizens who may have difficulty attending public events to participate in ministry consultations.

Planned Action (s):

Where applicable, the ministry will continue to include ODA compliant web pages to enable persons with disabilities to contribute feedback online to ministry consultations.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

Where feasible, the ministry continues to include an electronic component to ministry consultations to allow citizens who may have difficulty attending public events to participate online. This year the public was able to participate online in the Greenbelt and Brownfield consultations.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will post the accessibility of venues in advertisements or promotional material for its major public events.

Planned Action (s):

Information about accessibility for major ministry public events will continue to be included in advertising and/or on the web.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

Information about accessibility for major ministry public events has and will continue to be included in advertising and/or on the web. Accessibility information was included in advertising for the six public meetings for “Growing the Greenbelt” Initiative.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will coordinate requests for publications in alternate formats.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will continue to coordinate requests for publications in alternate formats through Publications Ontario.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to coordinate requests for publications in alternate formats through Publications Ontario.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that all future internet content is accessible as required by the ODA.

Planned Action (s):

All internet content will continue to be accessible as required by the ODA.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to ensure that all future internet content is accessible as required by the ODA.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will include accessible website design principles through ongoing training for web publishers.

Planned Action (s):

Accessible website design principles will continue to be included in training for intranet and internet publishers.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to include accessible website design principles through ongoing training for web publishers. This past year, ten training sessions were held for a total of 94 staff.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to update the “Accessibility at MMAH” pages on the intranet.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will continue to update the “Accessibility at MMAH” intranet pages to feature the up-to-date information on accessibility issues.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry will continue to update the “Accessibility at MMAH” intranet pages including additional links such as the World Blind Union PowerPoint Guidelines and a collection of “how to” best practices that will assist in the creation of accessible electronic Portable Document Format (PDF) documents that are screen-readable for people with visual impairment, in conformity with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Acts and Regulation Policy

Commitment: New

The ministry will work with the Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness (CEHSW) to implement Ontario Public Service policies and programs.

Planned Action (s):

- a) The Centre for Leadership and Learning generic training on ODA will continue to be part of mandatory training for new managers.
- b) All existing managers will be encouraged to take a refresher on line.
- c) Enhancing Employees' awareness by:
 - o Displaying ODA more prominently in the MMAH web site
 - o Including a direct link to the Act in the Employee Orientation website and New Manager's Orientation Guide
 - o Including in the agenda of the Ministry Orientation Program, with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: New

The ministry will continue to follow collective agreements and policy direction from, and partner with, the Enterprise/Regional Recruitment Centre to provide accommodation to job applicants who have self-identified and sought accommodation in the competition process.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will remind managers to inquire and meet accommodation needs of applicants if they set up interviews themselves rather than through the Recruitment Centres.

The Ministry will develop a checklist for use by the managers, or their delegates, when they set up interviews with the applicants.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

To be reported on in the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure an accessibility assessment is conducted for procurements \$5,000 and over.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry has included accessibility assessment for procurements \$5,000 and over as one of the mandatory requirements in the procurement policies.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry has and will continue to ensure an assessment is conducted and documented on file for procurements \$5,000 and over to identify potential barriers to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy Act Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals are considered from the perspective of those with disabilities.

Planned Action (s):

Ministry staff evaluates all Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals which impact the MMAH mandate. If a ministry submission or proposal has ODA considerations, the ministry submits the submission or proposal to the Accessibility Directorate for review.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to ensure that Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals are considered from the perspective of those with disabilities.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to address attitudinal barriers by encouraging awareness of and sensitivity to, accessible issues and identify any potential barriers by soliciting staff input and ideas.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will continue to raise awareness of accessibility issues and provide updated information on the AODA. Staff input and ideas will be encouraged to identify any potential barriers.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

A “Lunch and Learn” session, as well as an off-site information session, was made available to MMAH staff to inform them about accessibility issues and provide up-to-date information on the AODA and the progress of the Standards Development Committee. Also, an accessibility questionnaire was circulated to MMAH staff in order to raise awareness for accessibility issues and seek ideas for barrier removal. Questionnaire responses are currently being reviewed for possible implementation in future accessibility plans.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Promote awareness of accessibility issues among staff.

Planned Action (s):

Encourage awareness of accessibility issues by marketing the “Accessibility at MMAH” web page on the ministry intranet and soliciting staff input and ideas on the intranet suggestion box.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved:

In addition to hosting AODA “Lunch and Learn” and information sessions, accessibility awareness has been encouraged through the promotion of the Annual Accessibility Expo and the posting of accessibility feature stories on the MMAH intranet home page. The “Accessibility at MMAH” web site continues to host a suggestion box and staff continues to be encouraged to submit their suggestions for barrier removal.

For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-585-7041

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1-800 number: 1-866-220-2290

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

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: 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.

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

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