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Accessibility Plan

Office of Francophone Affairs 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction for 2007-08 Accessibility Plans

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.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service, transportation, information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee and was posted for public review on June 27 and will be available for public comment until September, 28 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April, 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Office of Francophone Affairs. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 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.

**A Message from the Minister of
Community and Social Services,
Minister Responsible for
Francophone Affairs and Minister**

Responsible for Ontarians with Disabilities



Madeleine Meilleur

I am pleased to present the Office of Francophone Affairs' *Accessibility Plan 2007-2008*. As the Minister Responsible for Ontarians with Disabilities, accessibility is a particularly important issue for me.

In the two years since the enactment of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 (AODA), considerable progress has been made in identifying and eliminating the obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities. The Lieutenant-Governor has approved the accessible customer service regulations which will come into effect on January 1st 2008. As well, a proposed standard on accessible transportation was deployed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee and posted for public view between June 27 and August 31, 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007. However, we realize that we must continue to work in order to ensure that all Ontarians are able to fully contribute to the vitality and prosperity of our province.

The Office of Francophone Affairs is

determined to improve the accessibility of its facilities, services, and special events for everyone in numerous areas such as customer service, communications, employment, and the built environment. A number of initiatives have already been undertaken including documents available in alternate formats on the Office's website, the production and distribution of a Planning Accessible Meetings guide, and a TTY number for individuals with a hearing impairment. In addition, Office staff members receive ongoing training on accessibility. This year's plan builds on these successful initiatives to set priorities for the Office in the area of accessibility for next year.

The annual accessibility plans developed by all agencies in the public and broader public sectors are excellent tools for discussion and action to make governments and the general public aware of the importance of providing access for everyone. I am convinced that the Office of Francophone Affairs' Accessibility Plan 2007-2008 will help to raise awareness among all concerned and will lead to positive changes for an increasingly inclusive society.

The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur

Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

In 2006-2007, the Office moved to a new location and still achieved its planned commitments outlined in its 2006-07 accessibility plan. The following section provides a status report of the Office of Francophone Affairs' achievements in contributing to the government achieving its goal of a more accessible Ontario

Category: Customer Service

Commitment:

- Continue to provide quality services to those who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing within the Francophone community

Action (Timeline/Status)

- TTY (text telephone) available for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing (completed);
- Ensure that staff working at the reception are trained to use it (completed);
- TTY number was published on the Office's new letterhead and on all staff business cards (completed).

Category: Employment

Commitment:

- Undertake the development of an accessibility awareness training program

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Development of an accessibility awareness training program for its staff (completed)
- Accessibility awareness training session with a representative of the Accessibility Directorate (Completed)

Commitment:

- Be responsive to the staff needs. Ensure that the work environment provides full

accessssibility in accordance with the guidelines set out in the *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*.

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Purchase of three large LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen monitors to accommodate employees experiencing visual difficulties (completed);

Category: Communications and Information

Commitment:

- Communications and information Factor ODA requirements in all updates to the Office's internet and intranet sites

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Design new intranet site to ensure compliance with ODA requirements (at early stage)

Category: Built Environment

Commitment:

- Ensure new office space meets *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Respect of the Guidelines included in expectations from space designers' consulting team (completed);
- Review of the Office's new location to identify physical barriers (completed);

- Installation of full spectrum lighting throughout the office to compensate for lack of natural sunlight. (completed).

Category: Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

- Review proposed changes, if any, to the *French Language Services Act* and regulations in the coming year to ensure that ODA requirements are met.

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Ongoing – see section on the new French Language Services Commissioner's Office

Commitment:

- Review proposed changes, if any, to the *French Language Services Act* and regulations in the coming year to ensure that ODA requirements are met.

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Addition of a section on services for Francophones with disabilities to the *French Language Services Guidelines* (completed).

Commitment:

- Share information on how to make community events, meetings and conferences accessible to Francophones with disabilities.

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Translation & distribution to all ministries and agencies' French-language services coordinators of the guide *Planification de réunions accessibles* (completed).
- The document was also posted on OFA intranet site (completed).

Commitment:

- Ensure OFA publications are available in alternate formats, upon request.

Action (Timeline/Status)

- Ongoing

Commitments – Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the Office of Francophone Affairs commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer Service

Commitment:

- Continue to provide quality services people with disabilities or special needs

Action

- Ensure all events meet requirements from the Planning Accessible Meeting Guidelines (ongoing);
- Ensure the good working condition of its TTY (text telephone) and continue to

ensure that staff working at the reception, are trained to use it.

- TTY number was published on the Office's new letterhead and staff business cards (ongoing).

Commitment:

- There will be a particular effort to make the staff more sensitive to attitudinal barriers, specifically in dealing with customers with developmental/ intellectual or mental disabilities

Action

- Encourage all staff to undertake the *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* training module.
- Discuss with the ODA the possibility of having speakers for Brown bag lunches on relevant topics (this could be undertaken in collaboration of other ministries and agencies located on the 6th floor at College Park).
- Circulate information on this particular topic to all staff.

Employment

Commitment:

- Develop an accessibility awareness training program

Action

- Development of an accessibility awareness training program that will ensure that our customer service for persons with disabilities policies and

practices embody the following principles:

- Dignity: Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity of persons with disabilities;
- Equity: Services are provided in a manner that affords equal opportunity and benefit;
- Inclusion: Services are provided in a manner that promotes their integration and full participation;
- Independence: Services provide maximum autonomy, while respecting their right to privacy and security;
- Responsiveness: Services are responsive to their customer service requirements and delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required;
- Sensitivity: Services are provided in a manner that is sensitive to their needs. (ongoing)

Communications and Information

Commitment:

- Factor ODA requirements in all updates to the Office's internet and intranet sites

Action

- Design of the new intranet site has been entrusted to the I & IT Cluster team who has the required expertise to ensure compliance with ODA requirements (in

progress)

Built Environment

Commitment:

- Ensure office space meets *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities Guidelines*.

Action

- Annual review of the Office's facility to identify any remaining physical barriers.

Office of the New French-Language Services Commissioner

Commitment:

- Office designed according to the guidelines set in the *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*.

Action

- Respect of the Guidelines included in expectations from space designers' consulting team (pending)
- Review to identify remaining physical barriers once the Office has moved to its new location (pending).

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

- The Office will be working on the establishment of the Office of the French-language Services Commissioner and

will ensure that ODA requirements are met.

Action

- Any changes to the *French Language Services Act* or to its regulations will be developed and examined with a view to meet the requirements of the ODA.

Barriers to be Addressed

The Office of Francophone Affairs commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Employment

Commitment:

- Establish an OFA Accessibility Planning Working Group

Action

- Review and update the accessibility plan, monitor its implementation and provide regular reports to the Office's senior management and updates to staff (ongoing).

Commitment:

- Establish an Accessibility Planning Working Group for the new Office of the French-language Services Commissioner

Action

- Review and consider all relevant

information regarding accessibility of the different aspects of the establishment of such an office, including training of new staff, and update senior management and staff (pending).

Commitment:

- There will be a particular effort to make the staff more sensitive to attitudinal barriers, specifically in dealing with customers with developmental/ intellectual or mental disabilities

Action

- Encourage management and all staff to undertake the *May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* training module.

Built Environment

Commitment:

- Ensure the new Office's is a barrier-free facility.

Action

- Review of the facility to identify any physical barriers (annually).

For More Information

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

Please phone: 416 325-4943

General inquiry number: 416 325-4949

TTY number: 416 325-0017

1-800 number: 1-800-268-7507

E-mail: ofa@ontario.ca

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

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcsc.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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Tel: 416 326-5300

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