



OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

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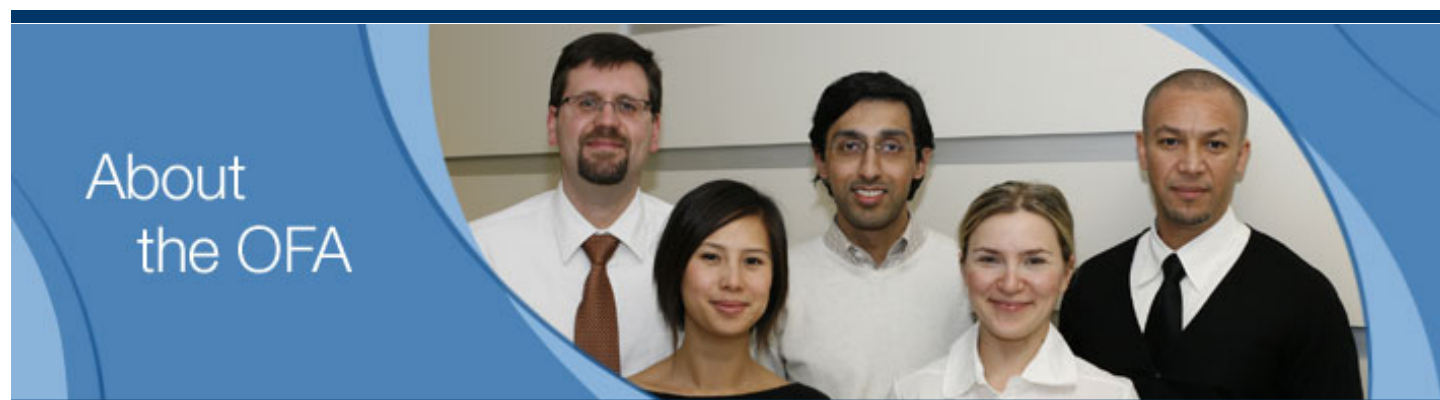
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Office of Francophone Affairs 2008-2009 Accessibility Plan

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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 Office of Francophone Affairs' 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.

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 Office of Francophone Affairs to build on. The Office 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_accplans09.htm.

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Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into force on January 1, 2008. To begin to transition OPS ministries to the new regulation, this section has been added to the ODA Planning Template to highlight customer service initiatives.

The Office of Francophone Affairs will work diligently to comply with the Accessibility Standards by January 1st, 2010. The OFA is a small office within the OPS (20 employees) and have created a committee to ensure that:

- policies, practices and procedures are in place to ensure provision of services to people with disabilities. This will include:
 - policies to allow people to use their own personal assistive devices to use our services such as wheelchairs, scooters, voice activated computers etc. and we endeavour to offer (assistive devices, services, or methods) as required to enable them to access our services;
 - policies, practices and procedures consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, equality and opportunity;

- Communicating with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability (TTY line, etc.). This will include training for staff:
 - to interact with the public on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard and,
 - on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.

- people with disabilities will be allowed to:
 - be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in our office and,
 - be permitted to bring an assistive person with them while accessing our services;

- if ever our facility or services are temporarily disrupted every effort will be made to reduce disruption to people with disabilities using our services by contacting them and/or arranging alternate meeting/work locations or alternate means of accessing our information;
- a process to receive feedback on how we provide services to people with disabilities and how we respond to any feedback and take appropriate action on any complaints and that we make this information readily available to the public.

Focus Area: Review and amend policies, practices and procedures to ensure provision of services to people with disabilities

Commitment: Ongoing – We are committed to ensure that new policies, practices or procedures result in providing services and meets the needs of people with a disability.

Planned Action(s): Any policy, practice or procedure will be considered in the context of creating a barrier, defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from accessing any of our services as a result of their disability.

The Office of Francophone Affairs' will under the Customer Service Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) will report requirements and comply with the regulation by ensuring that the following common barriers do not exist in the OFA and do not prevent staff or the public from accessing the OFA, its documents or website.

Type of Barrier	Example / Impact
Physical	A door knob that cannot be turned by a person with arthritis due to limited mobility and strength – all of OFA's door knobs were modified to accommodate easy access/usage.
Architectural	OFA will review its equipment room layout to ensure entry/exit can accommodate a person using a wheelchair or scooter to safely manoeuvre within this space.
Informational	OFA will work with individuals to ensure its publications are available in large print, Braille or other alternative formats as required/requested.
Communication	The OFA will continue to take hearing impairments into account by continuing to use TTY equipment, print format as other means of communication.

Attitudinal	All staff will include accessibility training in their learning plans. All staff will be required to complete May I Help You? training.
Technological	OFA will provide information where/when possible by mail, in person, via phone, TTY, on-line or by electronic means and remote access.
Practice	OFA will continue to ensure all of its meetings are held in locations that barrier-free and accessible to persons with disabilities.
Policy	OFA has created a committee to create, implement and review policies to ensure persons with disabilities have full access to their offices, meeting locations, publications and are greeted appropriately by all staff. The committee will establish a feedback procedure to assist in this respect.
Developmental/ Intellectual	OFA will take particular effort to make its staff more sensitive to employee barriers/sensitivities specifically when dealing with peers with developmental/intellectual or invisible disabilities. The committee will find sensitivity training and investigate lunch hour information sessions.
Invisible Disabilities	OFA will ensure its employees are sensitive when dealing with peers and the general public with invisible disabilities. The committee will find sensitivity training and investigate lunch hour information sessions.

There are two basics areas which are under permanent consideration and are of an ongoing nature:

- service to clients accessing our services whether in person or through remote access (web, telephone, etc)
- in organizing meetings of citizens with/ for the Minister's office

Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

Results Achieved: all the services provided were, or will be, accessible; and, all the meetings organized were, or will be, accessible.

Focus Area: Policies are in place to allow people to use their own personal assistive devices (e.g. computer voice recognition, wheelchairs, scooters etc.) to use our services and we endeavour to offer assistive devices, services, or methods, as required, to enable them to access our services;

Commitment: Ensure that our built environment does not offer any barriers.

Planned Action(s): Yearly review of the office and review of ODA and building standard guidelines to ensure accessibility.

Focus Area: Establishment of policies, practices and procedures to ensure provision of services to people with disabilities.

Commitment: Ongoing – We are committed to ensuring that any new policies, practices or procedures do not result in creating a barrier.

Planned Action(s): Policies, practices or procedures will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee to ensure that they do not result in the creation of a barrier, defined as [anything that prevents a person with a disability from accessing any of our services as a result of their disability](#).

Focus Area: Our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality and opportunity

Commitment: The Accessibility Committee will be involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures to ensure that:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity of persons with disabilities (dignity);
- Services are provided in a manner that affords equal opportunity and benefit (equity); and,
- Services are provided in a manner that promotes their integration and full participation (inclusion);

Planned Action(s): The OFA will ensure all staff receive appropriate training and all staff include accessibility training in their learning plans.

Focus Area: Staff are trained on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard. This will include ensuring staff are able to communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability; staff are trained to interact with the public on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standards.

Commitment: The OFA will ensure front line staff receive appropriate training. Staff will include accessibility training in their learning plans.

Planned Action(s): Provide OFA staff with appropriate training and ensure staff complete the May I Help You? training.

Focus Area: Prepare staff to be familiar with how to interact with people with various disabilities, prepare them to wait until the individual describes his or her situation rather than making assumptions. Avail OFA staff with products available from www.AccessOn.ca i.e. Compliance Manual, Summary of Requirements, The Guide to the Customer Service Standards and various tools, tips and resources on how to serve customers with disabilities.

Commitment: We are committed to meeting the requirements under the Customer Service Standard. For example, we will educate staff on how to interact with a person with a service animal (e.g. not to distract or touch the guide dog while it is working). In addition, educate staff on how to use assistive devices to interact with persons with disabilities e.g. TTY. We will invite the ADO to conduct Lunch and Learn session on the Customer Service Standards.

Planned Action(s): Obtain and share resource material with staff.

Focus Area: People with disabilities who use a support person will be permitted to bring that person with them while accessing our services in premises open to the public.

Commitment: Educate staff on how to interact with a guide.

Planned Action(s): Obtain and share resource material with staff.

Focus Area: Should our facility or services be temporarily disrupted, every effort will be made to minimize disruption for people with disabilities.

Commitment: If ever our facility or services are temporarily disrupted we will make every effort to ensure that people with disabilities will not be affected by contacting them ahead of their visit/meeting or finding an alternate location to meet or work.

Planned Action(s): We are investigating ways of obtaining a Braille message that could be posted at the door in the event of an emergency.

Focus Area: A process is established to provide feedback on how we provide services to people with disabilities and how we respond to any feedback and take appropriate action on any complaints.

Commitment: The newly created committee will look into creating policies and procedures relating to comments or complaints received.

Planned Action(s): Have policies and procedures in place by the end of 2009, if not earlier.

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Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

In the near future, the OPS will be obligated to comply with four new standards in the areas of transportation, information and communication, employment and the built environment. This section presents the Office's readiness and preparation for these new standards currently under development.

Initiatives described below are identified by these four areas:

- transportation;
- information and communication;
- employment; and,
- the built environment.

Our general comments for these four new standards are as follows:

- the first standard area does not apply to our services;
- information and communications means whether in person, by phone or via emails or the web a person with a disability must be able to have access to our services and staff. The OFA has and will continue to be committed to achieving information and communication means by conforming to the visual access guidelines and providing information/material in various formats.
- employment and built environment are related as we are ensuring that our office is considered accessible by both the public and staff.

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 and commitments for 2008-2009 in contributing to the government achieving its goal of a more accessible Ontario

Focus area: Customer service

Commitment: The Office endeavours to provide quality services to those who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing within the Francophone community.

It should be noted that most Francophones use the Quebec Sign Language instead of the American Sign Language.

Planned actions: The OFA will continue to ensure that the TTY (text telephone) is working properly and is available (ongoing).

- Ensure we have sufficient staff which are trained to use it (ongoing).

- TTY number is printed on the Office's letterhead, on all staff business cards and on its web site (ongoing). Business cards will have Braille as we turn them over.

Focus area: Employment

Commitment: The OFA ensures that staff and candidates are provided with any requirements identified. The OFA proactively ask candidates if they have any requirements and work with them to meet those requirements.

Planned actions:

- Development of an accessibility awareness training program for its staff (ongoing) and new staff are strongly encouraged to complete the online training module.
- The Office strives to be responsive to staff needs and ensure that the work environment provides full accessibility in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities.
- OFA has purchased large LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen monitors to accommodate employees experiencing visual difficulties (completed);

Focus area: Communications and information

Commitment and Planned Actions: Factor ODA requirements in the redesign of both internet and intranet web sites, at early stage.

Focus area: Built environment

Commitment: Continue to ensure that the OFA's new office space meets *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*

Planned Actions: Installed full spectrum lighting throughout the office to compensate for lack of natural sunlight which may cause "SAD" for some individuals. Providing more light may reduce employees/general public visible and/or invisible effects.

Focus area: Acts and regulations

Planned actions:

- Review proposed changes, if any, to the *French Language Services Act* and regulations in the coming year to ensure that ODA and AODA requirements are met.
- Review OFA *French Language Services Guidelines* to include information on meeting the needs of Francophones with disabilities. Addition of a section on services for Francophones with disabilities to the *French Language Services Guidelines* (completed).
- Share information with staff and francophone groups on how to make community events, meetings and conferences accessible to Francophones with disabilities. Translation & distribution to all ministries and agencies' French-language services coordinators of the guide "*Planification de réunions accessibles*" (completed).
- The document was posted on OFA intranet site (completed).
- Ensure OFA publications are available in alternate formats, upon request (ongoing).

In 2008-2009, the Office of Francophone Affairs commits to assessing its activities determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

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

- Ensure all events meet requirements from the Planning Accessible Meeting Guidelines (ongoing);
- Ensure 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 letterhead, staff business cards and web sites (ongoing).

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

- Continue to encourage all staff to undertake the May I Help You? training, 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.

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Employment

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

Factor ODA requirements in all updates to the Office's internet and intranet sites which are being redesigned:

- 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

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

- Carry out regular reviews of the Office's facility to identify any physical barriers.

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For More Information

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

Please phone: 416 325-4940

General inquiry number: 416 325-4967

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.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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