

OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

You are here > [Home](#) > [About the OFA](#) > [Plans and reports](#) > Accessibility Plan 2009-10

Office of Francophone Affairs ▾

► Minister's Office

▼ About the OFA

► Mission and vision

► Deputy minister & OFA employees

► Plans and reports

► Programs and initiatives

► OFA & Canadian & international francophonie

► Work for the OFA

► French Language Services Act

► Francophones in Ontario

► News and Announcements

► Frequently Asked Questions

► Contact Us

Explore Government

Contacts >



OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan

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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements](#)

[Report on Commitments](#)

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

[For More Information](#)

[TOP](#)

Introduction

The Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers in key areas of everyday life.

These standards will increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

The Government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province, beginning in January 2010 when the first standard — for customer service — comes into force.

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2001 (ODA).

Building on last year's plan, the 2009-10 accessibility plan will continue moving the Office of Francophone Affairs towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The OFA is a small office within the OPS (20 employees). Our on-going commitment is to make programs, policies and services that are inclusive of all people. Our practice has always been to accommodate special needs upon request. We have created a committee to ensure provision of services to people with disabilities and that undertakes a review of current practices and procedures. This year

the Office of Francophone Affairs has been preparing its staff to be in full compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services by January 2010.

Links to the other ministry plans are available at:
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm

[TOP](#)

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1st, 2008. All OPS ministries must comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010. To begin to transition OPS ministries to this 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.

Focus Area: Training on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard. This includes 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.

Impact: Training

Commitment: Provide staff with the appropriate training and ensure staff complete the two parts of *May I help you?* training; Share resources related to Customer Service Standards.

Planned Action(s): The OFA will ensure front line staff and anyone who works on policies, practices or procedures receives appropriate training and includes accessibility training in their learning plans.

Implementation timeframe: All staff will complete the two parts of *May I help you?* course by December 31, 2009.

Results achieved: Obligated staff have completed the two parts of *May I Help You?* On-line course in October 2009. Other program staff are also completing the course. Tools and resources of the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service have been shared with all staff.

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

Impact: Policies

Commitment: On-going

We are committed to ensure that new policies, practices or procedures result in providing services and meet the needs of people with a disability. No new policies, practices or procedures were developed in 2009-2010.

The Office will under the Customer Service Regulation 429/07, continue to report requirements and comply with the regulation by ensuring that this policy is embedded into our specific practices, policies and procedures and that accessibility becomes part of regular practices, including interactions with members of the public.

Planned action(s): Continued efforts to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, equality and opportunity;

Results achieved: The OFA applies the accessibility policies in dealing with the public and embodies the above principles in its employment practices.

Focus Area: Service to clients accessing our services whether in person or through remote access (web, telephone, etc.)

Impact: Services

Commitment: on-going

Planned action(s):

1. Allow people to use their own personal assistive devices to use our services such as wheelchairs, scooters, voice activated computers etc. People with disabilities are also allowed to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in our office and/or are permitted to bring a support person with them while accessing our services.

2. Training our staff on how to communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability (TTY line, etc.). This includes training on:

- How to interact with the public on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard;
- The provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standards.

There is a particular effort to make the staff more sensitive to attitudinal barriers, especially in dealing with customers with developmental/intellectual or invisible disabilities.

3. 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. Investigation on ways of obtaining a Braille message that could be posted at the door in the event of emergency is still underway.

4. The OFA accessibility committee is planning to establish a feedback procedure on how we provide services to people with disabilities; how we respond to any feedback and to take appropriate action on any complaints and that we make this information readily available to the public.

Results Achieved: Organized meetings of citizens for the Minister's office or with OFA's staff were/are accessible; Information on how to provide quality services to people with disabilities was shared among OFA staff.

[TOP](#)

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.

A "barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. Examples of methodologies to identify barriers include a policy or program review, surveys or customer feedback mechanisms, etc.

Initiatives described below are identified by these areas:

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

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

- 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.

The following section provides a status report of the OFA's achievements and commitments for 2009-2010 in contributing to the government achieving its goal of a more accessible Ontario.

Focus area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

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

Planned action (s):

1. Complete the development of an accessibility awareness training manual for its staff. The manual will be translated in French and will be made available throughout OPS and the newly network of francophone OPS employees, Franco Go!
2. New staff are strongly encouraged to undertake the *May I Help You?* training and *Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* training module.
3. The Office strives to be responsive to staff needs and ensure that the work environment provides full accessibility in accordance with the Accessibility requirements.

Results achieved:

OFA has completed the purchase of large LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen monitors to accommodate employees experiencing visual difficulties;

The accessibility awareness training manual for our employees is in the completion stage and will be translated in French.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2008-March 2010

Focus area: Information and Communication

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Planned action (s):

1. The OFA will continue to ensure that the TTY (text telephone) is working properly and is available;
2. The Office continues to print the TTY number on the Office's letterhead, on all staff business cards and on its web site. Our front-line staff have taken the course *May I Help you?* that includes tips on using a TTY;
3. Improve the accessibility of the OFA Internet site.

Implementation timeframe: September 2008 – March 2010

Result Achieved: We have displayed in the OFA's office information on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service requirements and have distributed the requirements to each member of staff;

OFA has completed the translation and distribution of the guide "*Planification de réunions accessibles*" to all ministries. The document will be posted on OFA intranet site.

Focus area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: New

Early 2010, the Office of Francophone Affairs will be moving to a new location and will ensure that the designing of the new office space is in full compliance with the guidelines set out in the *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*.

Planned Actions:

1. The Office will ensure that full spectrum lighting throughout the office is installed as needed to compensate for lack of natural sunlight which may cause Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) for some individuals. Providing more light may reduce employees/general public visible and/or invisible effects. The Office will also ensure that our build environment is accessible and does not offer any barriers.
2. Continue to ensure that the OFA's new office space meets *Ontario Realty Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Facilities*.

Implementation Timeframe: on-going

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

[TOP](#)

For More Information

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

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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.mcscs.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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