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Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat & Democratic Renewal Secretariat 2004- 2005 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and Democratic Renewal Secretariat. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to

make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister



Access to justice is a fundamental component of Ontario's world-class justice system. In working to strengthen and provide

enhanced accessibility, the McGuinty government is working to build strong and liveable communities that offer a high quality of life for Ontarians of all abilities.

With the release of our second Accessibility Plan, I am pleased to recognize significant progress and plans for continued improvement in making our programs, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. Most notably, we are moving forward to remove physical barriers in many of our buildings and premises and we are working toward addressing accessibility issues at our major courthouse projects. For example, the recently opened courthouses in Chatham and Owen Sound meet existing regulations and the established barrier-free design guidelines. It is important that the Ontario Public Service leads by example in building on our successes and achievements and becoming an accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

We are proud of the progress we've made, however, work remains to be done. The government is committed to

working with Ontarians with disabilities on measures that will allow them to fully participate in building a stronger province. Through the Democratic Renewal Secretariat, we will be exploring ways of making it easier for all citizens to vote, including making polling stations more accessible for people with disabilities. The government will also introduce, this fall, measures to make the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) strong and effective.

This Accessibility Plan outlines specific and clear actions to be taken over the coming year to ensure that the vital public services we provide are more accessible for people with disabilities. It provides for continued improvement in operating barrier-free facilities, and in ensuring that accessibility will be considered in future initiatives and in the procurement of goods and services. The achievements highlighted in this year's plan, as well as the commitments to make further improvements in the coming year, demonstrate our ministry's efforts to support the government's commitment to make Ontario's communities strong, vital and accessible to people of all abilities. We are delivering real, positive change that will make Ontario strong, healthy and prosperous.

The Honourable Michael J. Bryant
Attorney General
Minister Responsible for Native Affairs
Minister Responsible for Democratic
Renewal

Report on Achievements of 2003- 2004 Planning Commitments

Commitment:

Post Accessibility Plans on the ministry/secretariats' Internet sites in an accessible format.

Status:

Complete.

Action and Timeframe:

The Accessibility Plan was posted on the ministry/secretariats' Internet sites in an accessible format in March 2004.

Commitment:

All new material posted on the ministry/secretariats' Internet sites will continue to be accessible to people with disabilities and will conform to Priority One and Two accessibility standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and their Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

All new material posted to the ministry/secretariats' Internet site is accessible by people with disabilities and conforms to Priority One and Two accessibility standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and their Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The interim Democratic Renewal website was developed in compliance with accessibility requirements as stipulated under

section 6 of the ODA. All ministry/secretariats' websites incorporate compatibility with text reader technology, ease of navigation for people who rely on alternative pointing devices, graphics supported by alternate text, high contrast colours and colour schemes to accommodate people with a visual impairment or who are colour blind and a fully-proportional site that allows users to enlarge or shrink font sizes.

Commitment:

Ensure that acts or regulations currently under review or going forward have issues of accessibility and barrier removal included in the review process.

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

Acts and regulations that went forward were reviewed prior to being finalized.

Commitment:

Conduct an assessment to address accessibility requirements within operating proposals put forward in the 2004-05 business planning submissions.

Status:

Deferred.

Action and Timeframe:

Deferred until 2005/06 Results-Based

Plan (RBP).

Rationale:

The templates provided by Management Board Secretariat (MBS) for the 2004-2005 Results-Based Plan did not include information on the ODA. It was therefore not possible to track ODA implications in all Results Based Planning notes.

Commitment:

Update internal procurement practices to comply with accessibility requirements of new corporate procurement directives.

Status:

In progress

Action and Timeframe:

Ongoing

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government's recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment:

Ministry/secretariat program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on accessibility in all procurement

activities as required under Section 5 of the ODA. All staff with responsibility for procurement will receive the Guidelines for Implementing Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act once distributed by Management Board Secretariat.

Status:

In progress

Action and Timeframe:

Ongoing

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government's recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment:

Review the Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses to ensure continued compliance with existing and new government guidelines for accessibility and, where necessary, make recommendations for revision.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry has reviewed and will continue to review the Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses to ensure compliance with existing and new government guidelines for accessibility. The ministry will monitor the development of any new or revised guidelines through ongoing communication and consultation with the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC).

Commitment:

All new construction/planning will continue to comply with the Ontario Building Code and address all current Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines for accessibility.

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

New construction/planning for capital projects will comply with existing Building Code and address current barrier-free requirements as identified in the Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines for accessibility.

Commitment:

Once received, revised Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines will be clearly communicated within the ministry/secretariats.

Status:

Guidelines are pending.

Action and Timeframe:

To be determined.

Commitment:

The Lease Activity Request Template will be updated to incorporate accessibility concerns. Each time a lease renewal is reviewed, accessibility requirements will be considered and communicated to Ontario Realty Corporation.

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

All new leases are reviewed for accessibility through the mandatory building requirements and the Ontario Realty Corporation lease schedules requiring barrier-free access. Accessibility requirements are also included in lease renewals and, where possible, negotiated into the renewal agreements.

Commitment:

In the annual planning process, the ministry will ensure that accessibility concerns are addressed in program requests for minor capital repair and rehabilitation projects.

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

In the 2004-05 Infrastructure Planning Process, all minor capital repair and rehabilitation project requests were reviewed for accessibility issues.

Commitment:

The ministry will incorporate accessibility as a component of its annual Infrastructure Plan requests.

Status:

Commitment achieved.

Action and Timeframe:

A 15 percent increase in capital funding was requested in the 2004-05 Infrastructure Plan to address ODA requirements. The majority of this funding was deferred to 2005-06 pending the outcome of the Results-Based Planning process and a review of all programs and services.

Commitment:

Include ODA information in the employee orientation program on the ministry/secretariats' intranet site.

Status:

Completed.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry/secretariats' intranet site has been updated to include ODA information.

Commitment:

Information on procedures for responding to requests for publications in alternate formats will be made available to staff through the intranet site.

Status:

Completed.

Action and Timeframe:

Information on the procedure for responding to requests for publications in alternate formats was posted on the intranet site.

Commitment:

Information on how to use the ministry/secretariat's TTY phone line and how the number is provided/advertised to the public will be made available to staff through the intranet site.

Status:

Completed

Action and Timeframe:

TTY service for people who are deaf is provided through a dedicated central line. Information on how to use the ministry/secretariats' TTY phone line was posted on the intranet site.

Commitment:

Review processes for employment competitions to identify areas for improvement in quality of service and

accommodation for people with disabilities as part of existing government accommodations requirements.

Status:

In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

Procedures are in place to ensure that employees and job applicants receive accommodation as required. Due to the identified need for employee accommodations, one of the ministry/secretariats' commitments for 2004/05 is the hiring of an Employee Accommodations (EA) Coordinator. Amongst the various duties, the EA Coordinator will review the recruitment process and make recommendations for improvement in accommodating people with disabilities.

Commitment:

Training on accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants who have disabilities will be made available to all new managers.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

Online ODA training is available to all ministry/secretariat managers. This training includes a component on accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants.

As well, a First Contact project has been initiated to develop human resources orientation materials for new managers. Materials are still in the development phases, and the ODA and accommodating the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants will be one of the components of this training.

Additionally, one of the ministry/secretariat's commitments for 2004/05 is the hiring of an Employee Accommodations (EA) Coordinator. The EA Coordinator will be focused on developing tools to assist managers in dealing with accommodation issues.

Commitment:

Include ODA training as a requirement in new learning plans for ministry managers/supervisors.

Status:

Completed.

Action and Timeframe:

As part of their 2004/05 performance contracts, Assistant Deputy Ministers were required to ensure that all new managers/supervisors take the online ODA training program.

Commitment:

The ministry/secretariats will research and identify appropriate training programs for receptionist/public inquiry staff and others working directly with the public so that staff understand the full scope of the definition of 'disability' and 'barriers to accessibility' as defined under the ODA.

Status:

Completed.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry/secretariat has identified training opportunities for these staff members. One of the ministry/secretariats' 2004/05 commitments is that all receptionist/public inquiry staff and others working directly with the public take the online ODA training.

Commitment:

Ensure that the ministry's new Human Resources Plan is consistent with the requirements of the ODA.

Status:

Deferred.

Action and Timeframe:

To be determined.

Rationale:

Because of the change in government and the implementation of results-based planning, the Human Resources Plans for 2004-05 were deferred until the next fiscal year. The new Deputy Minister at the Centre For Leadership and Human Resources Management is working on a new process and template for next year's plan.

Commitments

and Strategies for 2004-2005

Legislative Requirements

Commitment:

The Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses will be reviewed to ensure compliance with existing and new government guidelines for accessibility and, where necessary, make recommendations for revision.

Action:

The ministry will continue to review the Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses to ensure compliance with existing and new government guidelines for accessibility. The development of revised standards will be monitored through ongoing communication and consultation with the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC).

Timeframe:

Ongoing.

Commitment:

Revisions to Ontario Realty Corporation's accessibility guidelines will be communicated to staff of the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (ONAS) and Democratic Renewal Secretariat (DRS).

Action:

Upon receipt of revised Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines, a communication strategy will be developed to clearly communicate changes across the ministry/secretariats.

Timeframe:

To be determined; the above commitment is pending receipt of the revised guidelines from Ontario Realty Corporation. This commitment is deferred from 2003/04 Accessibility Plan.

Commitment:

Ministry/secretariat program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA.

Action:

The ministry/secretariats will continue to consider accessibility issues in their procurement activities. All staff with responsibility for procurement will receive the Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA.

Timeframe:

2004-05

Commitment:

All new material posted to the ministry/secretariats' Internet sites will

continue to be accessible by people with disabilities, as required under section 6 of the ODA.

Action:

The websites will continue to comply with the internationally recognized Priority One and Two accessibility standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and their Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The websites will continue to incorporate compatibility with text reader technology, ease of navigation for people who rely on alternative pointing devices, graphics supported by alternate text, high contrast colours and colour schemes to accommodate people with a visual impairment or who are colour blind and a fully-proportional site that allows users to enlarge or shrink font sizes.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

The ministry/secretariats will continue to work with Publications Ontario to respond to requests by or on behalf of a person with a disability for ministry/secretariat publications in alternate formats in a timely matter, unless it is not technically feasible to do so.

Action:

When ministry/secretariat staff receives a request, staff will refer it to Publications Ontario according to the current procedure for handling requests.

Timeframe:

Ongoing as requested

Commitment:

The ministry/secretariats will continue to accommodate the accessibility needs of their employees in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code to the extent that the needs relate to their employment.

Action:

Employment accommodation will continue to be provided on an individualized basis in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and corporate policy.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

The ministry/secretariats will continue to accommodate people with disabilities who apply for a position as a government employee and who have been invited to participate in the selection process for employment to the extent that the needs relate to the selection process.

Action:

Procedures are already in place to ensure that employees and job applicants receive accommodation as required. Managers will take the online ODA training to increase their

understanding of their obligations to accommodate the accessibility needs of job applicants.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

The ministry/secretariats will ensure that new managers and supervisors receive training on fulfilling obligations under Section 8 of the ODA.

Action:

Online training The Ontarians with Disabilities Act - Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities will be available to all new managers and supervisors. The module includes key information about the ODA and employment accommodation (EA), interactive case studies, practical tips, fundamental principles and stages of EA, and links to EA resources.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

An Accessibility Plan will be prepared and posted as part of the ministry/secretariats' annual planning process, in consultation with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Action:

The 2004-05 Accessibility Plan will be

posted on the ministry/secretariats' Internet site in an accessible format. The Accessibility Planning Working Group will meet quarterly to ensure the implementation of the commitments and strategies for 2004/05. The ODA Planning Lead will provide regular updates to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Timeframe:

The Accessibility Plan will be posted by September 30, 2004. Accessibility Planning Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis throughout 2004/05. ODA Planning Lead will meet with Chief Administrative Officer throughout 2004/05 as required.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Acts or regulations currently under review or going forward will have issues of accessibility and barrier removal included in the review process.

Action:

Acts or regulations will be reviewed for accessibility issues and barrier removal.

Timeframe:

As acts or regulations are drafted or reviewed.

Policies

Commitment:

Accessibility requirements will be considered as part of the 2005/06 Results-Based Planning (RBP) process.

Action:

Ministry RBP training materials will include information about complying with ODA, and will inform program areas about accessibility requirements for proposal notes. Training materials will also be updated to include any further direction from MBS about ODA requirements for the 2005/06 Results-Based Plan.

Timeframe:

Training materials will be updated upon release of Management Board directives for 2005-06 Results- Based Plan.

Commitment:

Each time a lease renewal is reviewed, accessibility requirements will be considered and communicated to Ontario Realty Corporation.

Action:

Using the Lease Activity Request Template that was revised in 2003-04 to incorporate accessibility concerns, all new leases will be reviewed for accessibility though the mandatory building requirements and the Ontario Realty Corporation lease schedules. Accessibility requirements are also included in lease renewals and, where possible, will be negotiated into the renewal agreements.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

Ensure that the ministry/secretariats' 2005/06 Human Resources Plan is consistent with the requirements of the ODA.

Action:

The Human Resources Plan will be reviewed for accessibility issues and barrier removal.

Timeframe:

2005/06

Commitment:

Ministry/secretariat Emergency Evacuation Procedures will include procedures for the safe evacuation of people with disabilities.

Action:

Emergency Evacuation Procedures will be updated as required.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Programs and Services**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to incorporate accessibility as a component of its annual Infrastructure Plan requests, as well as part of the planning process for capital projects.

Action:

Planning for ODA infrastructure requirements will be included in the annual Infrastructure Plan training to program areas as well as added to the Accommodation Resource Planning Tool. Likewise, the ministry will also review Infrastructure Plan requests prior to submission to ensure that ODA requirements have been addressed.

Timeframe:

2005-06 Infrastructure Planning Process, scheduled for Fall 2004.

Commitment:

An Employment Accommodations Coordinator will be hired to support the Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and Democratic Renewal Secretariat.

Action:

The Employment Accommodations Coordinator will be responsible for researching employment accommodations issues, reviewing employment accommodations service delivery and developing tools/resources to assist ministry/secretariat managers and supervisors in accommodating their staff.

Timeframe:

2004/05

Practices

Commitment:

Internal procurement practices will be updated to comply with the accessibility requirements of new corporate procurement directives.

Action:

Presentations and training for staff with responsibility for procurement materials will be updated based on Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA.

Timeframe:

2004-05

Commitment:

All receptionist/public inquiry staff and others working directly with the public will take the online ODA training.

Action:

Staff will be advised with instructions for accessing the online training.

Timeframe:

2004/05

Commitment:

Family and Small Claims Courts forms, guides and booklets will continue to be

provided online in an accessible format.

Action:

Family and Small Claims Courts forms, guides and booklets are currently posted online in an accessible format and any required changes/revisions to the forms will continue to be posted in an accessible format.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

Accessibility information for barrier-free courthouses will be posted on the ministry's Internet site and through a bilingual info-line -- 1-800-387-4456. The info-line will be publicized through government websites and telephone directories.

Action:

The ministry's Internet site will be updated and a bilingual information line will be launched, which will include accessibility information for barrier-free courthouses.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

Wherever possible, the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat will attempt to arrange barrier-free venues for its open houses in public buildings where people with disabilities have full

access.

Action:

Events, such as open houses in government owned facilities, municipal buildings and community halls, will be held in accessible buildings wherever possible. In some instances, such as open houses in remote First Nation Communities, this is not always possible.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Commitment:

Democratic Renewal Secretariat public events (including engagement activities), wherever possible, will be held in barrier-free venues according to the "[Planning for Accessible Meetings](#)" guidelines.

Action:

DRS will ensure, wherever possible, that public events are held in barrier-free venues, and will identify a person who is responsible for ensuring that accessibility matters are addressed the day of the event. Organizers of Democratic Renewal Secretariat events will use the "[Planning for Accessible Meetings](#)" guide to assist in making events accessible to people with disabilities.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

For more information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-326-2220

TTY number: 416-326-4012

E-mail:

jus.g.mag.webmaster@jus.gov.on.ca

Ministry Website address:

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Accessibility Ontario web portal at:

www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility.

The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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