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Accessibility Plan

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## Ministry of the Attorney General 2005-2006 Accessibility Plan

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### Introduction

The recent passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 marks a new era of accessibility in Ontario. This legislation will make Ontario one of the world leaders in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

While the government is moving forward to implement the new legislation, there will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

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These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 ensure real and effective change.

This document is the third annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of the Attorney General. It highlights achievements of the 2004-05 plan and outlines commitments for 2005-06 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 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**



The McGuinty government is committed to building a modern, effective and accessible



justice system. In this, the Ministry of the Attorney General's third annual Accessibility Plan, we report on our achievements and those of the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs

and the Democratic Renewal Secretariat from the past year. We also outline actions we plan to take over the coming year to ensure that our justice system is responsive to the needs of all Ontarians, including people with disabilities.

In 2004-05 we demonstrated our commitment to customer service by making it easier for Ontarians to access listings of barrier-free court locations. Improvements were made to the court address database on the ministry website at [www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca). Now, barrier-free locations are clearly denoted with a (  ). Each listing also provides a telephone number that the public may use if they need assistance.

In the past year, the ministry's continued leadership was also demonstrated in our renovations to the historic Brockville courthouse. In addition to modernizations that allowed us to consolidate services and improve security, the building was made barrier-free while at the same time, preserving Brockville's architectural heritage.

The principles of accessibility will continue to guide us in our daily business - in customer service, employment, communications and information, the built environment, and acts and regulations. This year's plan provides for continued improvements in many areas, including the creation and operation of barrier-free facilities, an ongoing commitment

to accessible information, and continued training for staff who provide service to the public.

The government will continue to take a leadership role in identifying, removing and preventing barriers, and in improving accessibility through a participatory, proactive and integrated approach. We will build on past progress and accomplishments under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, and begin to lay the foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will ensure real and effective change takes place. We look forward to working with our justice sector partners as we build a justice system that is truly accessible to all Ontarians.

The Honourable Michael Bryant

Attorney General

## **Report on Achievements of 2004-2005 Planning Commitments**

The Ministry of the Attorney General and its former secretariats are pleased to report on progress and continued improvement in making our programs, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. Our report on our 2004-2005 commitments includes the accomplishments of the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs (OSAA - formerly ONAS); and the Democratic Renewal Secretariat (DRS).

## **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.

**Status:**

In progress (to be redefined in 2005-06)

**Action and Timeframe:**

This commitment was not completed as the ministry has chosen to pursue an alternative approach to addressing accessibility concerns. See rationale below.

**Rationale:**

In all scenarios where the *Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses* would be referenced, it is the current ministry practice to concurrently review the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* (released fall 2004). As such, rather than revise the design standards for courthouses to duplicate what has already been provided by the ORC, in 2005-06 the ministry will commit to adding a reference to the *Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses* that the ministry will always apply. The ministry will integrate the *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* in conjunction with *Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses*

when these standards are consulted.

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

The Ontario Realty Corporation's (ORC) accessibility guidelines, *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities*, were released in the fall of 2004. These guidelines were shared with service providers, project consultants, and ministry project clients. All current and future projects are planned in accordance with these new guidelines (2005-06 commitment).

The revised Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) accessibility guidelines were communicated to all staff involved in procurement.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

The following activities were undertaken in 2004-05:

- Posted ODA resource material and summarized information on the ministry's intranet site - August 2004
- Summarized the ODA Procurement Guidelines and presented the material to the ministry's directors' Strategic Resource Group - September 2004
- Forwarded the *Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA* to all staff with responsibility for procurement - September 2004
- Updated the online controllership training material to include ODA requirements - January 2005
- Updated the in-class controllership training material to include ODA requirements - January 2005
- Provided ongoing advice to program areas regarding ODA procurement requirements - ongoing
- Staff responsible for procurement have received MBS guidelines for implementing the procurement provisions of the ODA.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

The Attorney General's Communications Branch upgraded from Adobe Acrobat version 5.0 to version 7.0. The new version of the software gives the webmaster greater flexibility and more options for ensuring ODA compliance when posting new website content. All websites will continue to be in compliance with accessibility standards.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

Ministry staff use the current procedure for handling these requests for publications. They liaise with Publications Ontario to respond to requests on a case-by-case basis.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This commitment is ongoing.

**Action and Timeframe:**

Employment accommodation will continue to be provided on an individualized basis in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and corporate policy. Accommodation plans are in place. Where appropriate, bargaining agents are included.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This commitment is ongoing.

**Action and Timeframe:**

Procedures are already in place to ensure that employees and job applicants receive accommodation as required. Requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, at times in consultation with the Human Resources Branch.

Managers have taken the online ODA training to increase their understanding of their obligations to accommodate the accessibility needs of job applicants.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

In progress

**Action and Timeframe:**

Online training *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act - Maximizing the*

*Contribution of Employees with Disabilities* is 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.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

The 2004-05 Accessibility Plan was posted on the ministry/secretariats' Internet site on September 30, 2004, in an accessible format.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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.

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This commitment is ongoing.

**Action and Timeframe:**

Acts or regulations are reviewed for accessibility and barrier issues as part of the ongoing legislative/regulatory and policy development process.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Policies**

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

Training materials were updated upon release of Management Board directives for the 2005-06 Results-Based Plan. During the training for the

2005/06 RBP, program staff within the ministry and its secretariats were advised that any potential impact on people with disabilities should be noted.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This commitment is ongoing.

**Action and Timeframe:**

The Lease Activity Request Template (revised in 2003-04) continues to incorporate accessibility requirements to ensure that these concerns are addressed with either the ORC or third-party landlords as leases are renewed or renegotiated.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

In progress

**Action and Timeframe:**

The Human Resources Plan will be reviewed for accessibility issues and barrier removal once guidelines are released.

**Rationale:**

Due to the restructuring and realignment of human resources service delivery across the OPS, human resource planning instructions and guidelines for ministries are under development by the Centre for Leadership/Human Resources Management.

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

In progress

**Action and Timeframe:**

Emergency Response Book for 720 Bay Street includes a section for persons with special needs requiring assistance. All Emergency Evacuation Procedures are updated as required.

**Rationale:**

MAG is committed to improving its disaster resilience. It will be conducting Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments across its facilities during 2005-2006.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment workshops will help the ministry and community officials foresee requirements for emergency management planning for Ministry of the Attorney General programs and services and will highlight training/exercise requirements for ministry staff and staff of associated stakeholders and partners to improve evacuation responses.

One of the specific tangible benefits resulting from the project to identify hazards and assess risks will be improved evacuation training, benefiting those with special needs.

## **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.

### **Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Commitment is on-going.

### **Action and Timeframe:**

For the 2005-06 Infrastructure Planning process, the ministry added a

component to the Capital/Accommodation Business Case Template (part of the Accommodation Resource Planning Tool), to ensure that all ODA requirements were identified and addressed in each project plan. The importance of identifying and addressing ODA requirements for all planned capital or accommodation projects was communicated internally to facility management coordinators, who are responsible for reviewing all business cases prior to submission, as well as to clients through the Results-based Planning Training Sessions.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

An employment accommodations coordinator will be hired to support the Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs and Democratic Renewal Secretariat.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

The employment accommodations coordinator's responsibilities include: researching employment accommodations issues, reviewing employment accommodations service delivery and developing tools/resources to assist ministry/secretariat managers and supervisors in accommodating their staff.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Practices**

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

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

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

In progress

### **Action and Timeframe:**

Staff will be advised with instructions for accessing the online training when it becomes available.

### **Rationale:**

The customer service training package: 'May I Help You? - Welcoming Customers with Disabilities' is under development. An online version will be available later in 2005.

This training package will provide material for a workshop on customer services for people with disabilities. It will raise the level of disability awareness and increase the knowledge of staff on how they can meet the needs of their customers with disabilities.

### **Commitment:**

Family and Small Claims Courts forms, guides and booklets will continue to be provided online in an accessible format.

### **Status:**

In progress

### **Action and Timeframe:**

In 2004/05 the Family Court guides and the Small Claims Courts forms, guides and booklets were posted on the ministry Internet site in an accessible format. Any required changes/revisions will continue to be

posted in an accessible format. .

The Family Court forms and booklets are expected to be posted on the ministry's Internet site by January 2006.

**Rationale:**

Changes in the Family Rules are required prior to the posting of Family Court forms and booklets.

**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.

**Status:**

Complete.

**Action and Timeframe:**

In 2004/05 the Court Address listing was made available on the ministry's Internet site. Courthouses that are barrier-free are denoted with the wheelchair symbol (  ). Each listing also provides a contact number that the public may use if they need assistance.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

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

**Rationale:**

N/A

**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. 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.

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

Public events were held in barrier-free venues and in accordance with the "Planning for Accessible Meetings" guidelines.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**Commitments and Strategies for 2005-2006**

This ministry intends to build on its achievements in the coming year by increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into its daily business practices in a number of priority areas including customer service, employment, communications and information, the built environment, and acts and regulations. This section represents the ministry's plan, including new commitments and initiatives for 2005-06.

**Customer Service**

**Commitment:**

The current Common Service Standards (these standards apply to telephone, correspondence, in-person services and customer feedback/complaint resolution) as employed by MAG will adhere to the ODA

requirements and any changes made to these standards will incorporate these requirements. These standards apply to all ministry employees.

**Action:**

A review of the Common Service Standards, with recommendations for change, was undertaken by Management Board Secretariat. Research and resultant recommendations considered accessibility issues. A strategic communications plan to promote and monitor compliance with the standards will support these requirements. Service Standards will continue to link to performance measures reflected in the Results-Based Planning process.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

All new material posted to the ministry 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. Ministry staff responsible for website development and maintenance will continue to be aware of changes and advances in technologies that support this commitment.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

Court Services Division will provide sign language interpretation services for all criminal matters and select civil/family matters.

**Action:**

The division recognizes the need to provide sign language interpretation services for persons with disabilities during court matters. Court site managers or supervisors will arrange to obtain these services as required.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

Court Services Division will provide a Disabilities Office contact number

on jury summon forms as well as on the ministry's Internet site. This will be accompanied with questions & answers for persons that may not be able to serve due to a disability and a contact number for assistance in completing any related questionnaires.

**Action:**

The division will continue to update the ministry's Internet site and the Disabilities Office as courthouses become ODA-accessible.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

One site manager per region will take the lead in responding to requests from persons with disabilities who access the court system.

**Action:**

Eight sites across the province will enhance information services by providing signage indicating onsite assistance is available to persons with disabilities. The lead manager will respond to requests by providing information and/or coordinating assistance. Requests and response activities will be tracked and summarized for review and identification of gaps and best practices.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

Ministry 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 will continue to consider accessibility issues in their procurement activities. The new tools recently released dealing with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, will be posted on the ministry's intranet site as new links to the *Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA*.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06 and ongoing.

**Employment****Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to accommodate the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants by providing manager and supervisor training regarding employment accommodation.

**Action:**

New managers and supervisors will receive training on fulfilling obligations under Section 8 of the ODA. 'Manager's First Contact Project' guide material will be expanded to include ODA obligations.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06 and ongoing.

**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to promote the accessibility of the workplace for people with disabilities by providing relevant tools and supports to managers and supervisors in accommodating their staff.

**Action:**

Products and support tools for human resource and management staff to increase their awareness of accommodation obligations will be deployed by the Employment and Accommodations Coordinator.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06 and ongoing.

**Communications and Information****Commitment:**

Accessibility requirements will be considered as part of the 2006-07

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 activity notes. Training materials will also be updated to include any

further direction from Treasury - Program Management & Estimates (PMED), about ODA requirements for the 2006-07 Results-based Plan.

**Timeframe:**

Training materials will be updated upon release of Treasury - PMED directives for the 2006-07 Results-based Plan.

**Commitment:**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission will prepare an Accessibility Plan that will ensure the services and materials provided by the commission are in a form that is accessible to the citizens of Ontario.

Although agencies are not required to prepare an Accessibility Plan, the commission believes that it should lead by example, supporting the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* regarding accessibility.

**Action:**

An internal working committee has been formed to work on the plan and will be responsible for reviewing current services and materials in consultation with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and stakeholders.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

**Built Environment**

**Commitment:**

Each time a lease renewal is reviewed, accessibility requirements will be considered and communicated to the 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 through the Ontario Realty Corporation's *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* and lease schedules. Accessibility requirements are also included in lease renewals and, where possible, will be negotiated into renewal agreements.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

The ministry will complete the Facilities Management Branch Ontario Disability Act (ODA) Review Chart when implementing all capital or accommodation projects.

**Action:**

The purpose of this review chart is to measure each project's compliance with the ORC *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* (released fall 2004). By completion of this chart, the ministry will identify non-compliant areas and will attempt to incorporate these

accessibility requirements within the scope of the project.

Note that for projects in existing facilities (such as heritage buildings), the ministry may not be able to achieve full compliance with the ORC standards for Barrier-Free Design. This will be assessed on a project-by-project basis.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Commitment:**

The ministry will ensure that the Facilities Management Branch Ontario Disability Act (ODA) Review Chart is completed for all building condition assessments for government-owned and third-party leased facilities.

**Action:**

As part of the ministry's Asset Management Plan, the ministry is completing building condition assessments for all ministry facilities. These assessments capture information on the condition of facility components (e.g. mechanical systems), capacity and operating/maintenance costs. As part of these assessments, the ministry will also assess accessibility requirements through completion of the Facilities Management Branch ODA Review Chart for each facility.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to incorporate accessibility as a component of its annual Infrastructure Plan requests and planning process for accommodation and capital projects.

### **Action:**

Planning for ODA infrastructure requirements - per the *ORC Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* (released Fall 2004) - will be included in the annual infrastructure plan training to program areas as well as continue to be included in the Infrastructure and Accommodation Planning Toolkit (formerly the Accommodation Resource Planning Toolkit). Prior to submission of the annual Infrastructure Plan, the ministry will review all requests to ensure that ODA requirements have been considered and/or addressed.

### **Timeframe:**

*2006-07 Infrastructure Planning Process* commences fall 2005.

## **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.

**Commitment:**

The ministry will add a reference to the *Province of Ontario Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses* indicating that these standards must always be consulted in conjunction with the Ontario Realty Corporation's *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities*.

**Action:**

The ministry will work with the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) and associated stakeholders to seek the necessary approvals regarding the addition of the above-mentioned reference.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06 fiscal year.

**Commitment:**

In assessing its emergency evacuation plans, the ministry will:

- take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities in all levels of their planning and response activities, and to involve members of this community in planning efforts;
- raise the awareness of people with disabilities of what they can do to prepare for their own safety and survival during times of

evacuation.

**Action:**

Develop evacuation plans and 'shelter in place' plans for all persons who must attend at Ontario's courthouses or Ministry of the Attorney General locations.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

**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](mailto:jus.g.mag.webmaster@jus.gov.on.ca)

Ministry Website  
address: [www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca)

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web site at: [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility). The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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