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2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and

customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of the Attorney General. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-06 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-07 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

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Message from the Minister



All public sector and broader public sector organizations are required



by law to have an annual accessibility plan and to make it available to the public. This is the fourth year in which plans have been written and are being implemented by organizations such as ours across the province.

This year marks the first anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) – legislation that will foster the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

To commemorate this milestone, three new accessibility standards to be developed in the areas of communications and information, the built environment, and employment were recently announced. This is in addition to two standards already being developed, which deal with customer service and transportation.

My ministry is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

Here at the Ministry of the Attorney General, we are building on the success of our previous three plans and continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with this ministry, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public or ministry stakeholders.

This ministry continues to work to make its facilities more accessible by incorporating accessibility requirements through capital investments across the province. For example, the newest courtroom constructed in Timmins includes accessibility components such as enlarged doorways, a public

seating gallery that accommodates wheelchairs, a fully accessible judge's dais, and wireless transmission of court proceedings for the hearing impaired. The ministry will use this courtroom as a model to further develop the standard for accessible courtrooms in future projects.

The ministry is also in the process of developing an asset management plan containing the basic inventory and facility condition ratings for all courthouses in the ministry's portfolio. This plan will provide information about the age and condition of our facilities in a way that will help us prioritize the work we can do to improve access and service delivery. More examples are provided in the pages that follow.

The Ministry of the Attorney General is committed to improving accessibility for employees and members of the public with disabilities. If you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you to send them using the contact information located at the end of this document.

The Honourable Michael Bryant
Attorney General

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Report on Achievements

2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of the Attorney General was successful in achieving commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Customer service

Commitment

Court Services Division will provide a Disabilities Office contact number on jury summons forms

as well as on the Ministry's Internet site. This will be accompanied by questions and 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.

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

The Jury Summons Form contains a contact number for persons with disabilities to call for information on access to Ontario's courts. The frequently asked questions page in the Jury Duty section of the Ministry's Internet site contains information for persons that may not be able to serve due a disability.

Commitment

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

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

CSD provides visual language interpretation services, if required, for:

- All criminal matters.
- Civil and family matters involving child protection.
- All litigants in Small Claims Court and at SCC counters.
- Litigants and their witnesses in civil, family and Small Claims Court matters if the litigant has been given a Fee Waiver Certificate.

Commitment

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

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

The Court Services Division has commenced planning for a pilot project to designate a Site Accommodation Coordinator in seven court locations across the province. The Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Providing assistance in accessing the court to individuals living with disabilities.
- Tracking requests for assistance and any actions taken in response to the requests, to identify gaps and best practices applicable to other sites.
- Providing experience to inform the development of accessibility services and responses for their court location.

Signage will be posted at each pilot site location to notify the public that persons with disabilities can contact a court representative to get assistance accessing court services.

The Division has established an internal committee to consult on this pilot project and an implementation plan for the pilot project is currently being developed. The Division is working towards implementation in the pilot sites by Fall 2006.

Rationale

The commitment was not completed during 2005/06 given operational demands within the Division.

Commitment

The current Common Service Standards (these standards apply to telephone, correspondence, in-person services and customer feedback/complaint resolution) as employed by the Ministry will adhere to the ODA requirements, and any changes made to these standards incorporate these requirements. These standards apply to all Ministry employees.

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

A plan was devised to promote and monitor compliance with the Common Service Standards, and was successfully implemented, revealing positive results. A telephone audit, completed in March 2006, showed an overall standard compliance rate of over 80%. Correspondence turnaround times were monitored and there was a 77% compliance rate achieved for the average 15-day turnaround standard for Minister's and Deputy's correspondence.

Commitment

Ministry 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

The following activities were undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of the Attorney General:

- ODA requirements and links to the appropriate documents were emphasized when

training sessions were conducted in the area of procurement practices and guidelines;

- The Ministry Intranet Controllershship Unit web page now contains several links to ODA-related guidelines, checklists, practices and Questions and Answers;
- ODA requirements are now included in the Ministry's Financial Delegation of Authority Framework documents, which is available on the Ministry's Intranet site; and
- ODA requirements are highlighted as part of general procurement advice given to program areas.

Employment

Commitment

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

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

Continued support on employment accommodation issues is provided by trained ministry Human Resources staff. Ministry-specific employment accommodation tools for managers are in the final stage of development.

Rationale

Tools to be made available in 2006-07.

Communications and information

Commitment

Accessibility requirements will be considered as part of the 2006-07 Results-Based Planning (RBP) process.

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

Training materials were updated for the 2006-07 Results-Based Plan. During RBP training, Ministry staff were advised that any potential impact on people with disabilities should be noted in the impact section of each submission.

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.

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

An internal working committee has been formed and a work plan has been developed to commence preparing the Accessibility Plan in 2006-07.

The committee will be responsible for reviewing current services and materials, consulting with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and its stakeholders.

Rationale

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.

Built environment

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*.

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

The reference was added to the design standards in 2005. The Ontario Realty Corporation's *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* is constantly reviewed in conjunction with the Design Standards for Courthouses for any project. This has become a standard practice for the Ministry's Facilities Management Branch.

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.

Status

Complete.

Action and Timeframe

Planning for ODA infrastructure requirements is now included in the annual Infrastructure Plan training provided to program areas, as well as in the Infrastructure & Accommodation Planning Toolkit. The Ministry will continue to review all Infrastructure Plan requests to ensure that ODA requirements have been considered and/or addressed.

Acts and regulations

Commitment

In assessing its emergency evacuation plans the Ministry will:

- Take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities at all levels of their planning and response activities, and actively 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.

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

In the Fall 2005, the Ministry's Emergency Management Unit conducted 22 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) workshops across the Province to over 200 managers and staff to assist them in completing their individual HIRA Reports.

Rationale

The Ministry's inaugural HIRA Report for 2005/06 has been completed and forms the foundation of the Ministry's emergency planning and preparedness. Local Business Continuity templates and Emergency Planning Guide templates, including Evacuation Plan guides, have been

provided to each Ministry location for local review and updating with the varied needs of people with disabilities taken into account.

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Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of the Attorney General was successful in achieving its commitments described in accessibility plans issued before 2005 - 2006. This section highlights specific achievements.

Customer service

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.

Status

Completed and ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The Ministry 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 are aware of changes and advances in technologies that support this commitment.

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.

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

New managers and supervisors continue to have access to the on-line Employment Accommodation tool through the OPS Intranet, and confer with Human Resources Consultants for further advice and support. Requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Communications and information

N/A

Built environment

Commitment

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

Status

Completed and ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

This is an ongoing practice for Ontario Realty Corporation. Accessibility requirements are reviewed for each lease renewal and are continually being updated. The Facilities Management Branch will further improve the process through lease renewal templates.

Commitment

As part of the implementation of all capital or accommodation projects, the Ministry's Facilities Management Branch will complete its Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Review Chart against the scope of the project.

Status

Completed and ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

This is a current practice for the Facilities Management Branch. By using the chart, projects are reviewed to ensure compliance with the ORC Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. All appropriate projects are reviewed against ODA standards for barrier-free design, and are assessed on a project-by-project basis.

Commitment

The Facilities Management Branch will complete its Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Review Chart for all building condition assessments for government-owned and third party leased facilities.

Status

In progress.

Action and Timeframe

As part of the Ministry's Asset Management Plan (AMP), the Ministry is completing building condition assessments and feasibility studies for appropriate Ministry facilities. As part of these assessments, the Ministry has assessed critical ODA compliance measures. Through these assessments, the Facilities Management Branch is able to measure the facility's ability to comply with the new ODA standards for barrier-free design.

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

Completed and ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

As acts or regulations were drafted or reviewed, counsel reviewed them for accessibility and barrier issues. Acts or regulations are reviewed for accessibility and barrier issues as part of the ongoing legislative/regulatory and policy development process.

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Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

The Ministry intends to build on its achievements in the coming year by increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into its business practices in priority areas including

customer service, employment, communications and information, the built environment, and acts and regulations. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

- Ministry program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on accessibility in all procurement activities, as required by Section 5 of the ODA;
- Accessibility requirements will be considered as part of the Results-based Planning process;
- The Ministry will prepare for implementation of Customer Service Accessibility Standards - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) 2005, through ongoing information and communication.
- The level of disability awareness will be raised and knowledge of staff will be increased about how they can meet the needs of their customers with disabilities, and better serve customers with disabilities;
- Customer service training for front-line staff will be incorporated into divisional training plans;
- Receptionist and public inquiry staff who work directly with the public will participate in ODA training, including refresher training answering the Ministry's TTY line; and
- The Ministry will continue to ensure the Common Service Standards adhere to ODA requirements.

Employment

- The Ministry will continue to promote accessibility of the workplace for people with disabilities by providing relevant tools and supports to managers and supervisors in accommodating their staff;
- The Ministry will continue to accommodate the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants by providing manager and supervisor training regarding employment accommodation;
- The Ministry will communicate the need for all new managers and supervisors to complete on-line ODA e-learning training;
- A learning component regarding accessibility will be part of divisional conferences and annual training events to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities through information sharing and skill development of Ministry employees; and
- Accessibility awareness will be incorporated into staff orientation.

Communications and information

- All new material posted to the Ministry website will continue to be accessible by people with disabilities, as required by Section 6 of the ODA;
- The Ministry website will continue to meet or exceed requirements mandated by the internationally recognized Priority One and Two accessibility standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and their Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The website will continue to incorporate accessibility 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 are aware of changes and advances in technologies that support this commitment.

Built environment

- When conducting building condition assessments, feasibility assessments, or facility planning studies, the Facilities Management Branch will review accessibility requirements through the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Review Chart;
- The Ministry will continue to incorporate accessibility as a component of its annual Infrastructure Plan requests and planning process for accommodation and capital projects;
- Each time a lease renewal is reviewed, accessibility requirements will be considered and communicated to the Ontario Realty Corporation; and
- As part of the implementation of capital and accommodation projects, the Ministry will complete the Facilities Management Branch Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Review Chart against the scope of the project where appropriate.

Acts and regulations

- The Ministry will review the Ontario Realty Corporation's *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* in conjunction with the *Provincial Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses* to identify accessibility barriers for judges' daises in court facilities;
- Acts or regulations currently under review or going forward will be reviewed for issues of accessibility and barrier removal; and
- The Ministry will ensure that best practices pertaining to emergency preparedness for persons with disabilities are provided to the Ministry's emergency management building leads.

Other barriers

- An Accessibility Plan will be prepared and posted as part of the Ministry's annual planning process, in consultation with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

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Commitments — Barriers to be addressed

The Ministry of Attorney General commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments:

Customer service

Barrier

Ministry staff need to be made aware of and ready for the imminent implementation of Customer Service Accessibility Standards and should be prepared for the transition from the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001 – to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005.

Commitment

- Support the development of standards - Ministry representative is a voting member of the Customer Service Standards Development Committee;
- Communicate the process and outcomes of the Customer Service Standards Development Committee within the Ministry;
- Participate in a pilot of the e-learning module of customer service training; and
- Incorporate customer service training for front-line staff into divisional training plans.

Responsibility

Management

Timeline

2006-07

Barrier

Emergency evacuation and business continuity plans must include consideration of persons with disabilities and these concerns must be communicated to building leads to ensure safety for all staff.

Commitment

The Ministry will ensure that the Emergency Management Unit will communicate emergency preparedness planning parameters, including the necessity of taking into account persons with disabilities, to Ministry emergency management building leads as they review and update their

localized business continuity plans and emergency evacuation plans.

Responsibility

Emergency Management Unit

Timeline

Ongoing.

Barrier

Telephone and correspondence Common Service Standards may need to be updated and improved on to reflect new standards due to increased obligations coming into effect soon under the AODA.

Commitment

To continue to promote and educate Ministry employees on the Common Service Standards and review any areas of concern particularly where communications systems and individual circumstances prevent full adherence to ODA requirements. The Quality Service Project Team will work within the Ministry, as requested, to deliver awareness information sessions concerning the increased obligations of meeting the needs of persons with disabilities under the new legislation.

Responsibility

Quality Service Project Team

Timeline

Information sessions to be held in 2006/2007

Employment accommodation

Barrier

Currently, divisional conferences and annual training events do not have a mandated accessibility learning component.

Commitment

In order to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities through information sharing and skill development of Ministry employees, the Ministry will:

- Include a learning component regarding accessibility for all divisional conferences and annual training events; and
- Incorporate accessibility awareness into staff orientation.

Responsibility

Management

Timeline

2006-07

Communications and information

Barrier

TTY Service to clients must be promoted to members of the public using all communications outlets at the Ministry's disposal, and all public inquiry staff must be made familiar with teletypewriter technology.

Commitment

- Continue to train or refresh training of public inquiry staff to use TTY equipment and provide Ministry-specific TTY service to clients; and
- Advertise the Ministry's TTY telephone number in various telephone directories, on the Ministry Internet, and on communication materials.

Responsibility

Management

Timeline

In progress.

Built environment

Barrier

Not all judges' daises in court facilities across the Province of Ontario are fully wheelchair accessible.

Commitment

The Facilities Management Branch will engage in developing a best practice bulletin for barrier-free dais requirements for courthouse facilities.

Responsibility

Facilities Management

Timeline

One year.

Acts and regulations

N/A

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For more information

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

General inquiry number:	(416) 326-2220 or 1-800-518-7901
Fax number:	(416) 326-4007
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 Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web site at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

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