

MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements	5
Other Accessibility Commitments	13
For More Information	30

Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government, will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of the Attorney General's sixth annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

Access to justice, including accessibility for people with disabilities, continues to be a priority for the Ministry of the Attorney General. This year, the ministry has made significant progress. We have undertaken an accessibility strategic planning process that sets out targets and actions for the next three to four years that will support our compliance with the new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and to prepare us for implementing accessibility standards in the areas of the built environment, information and communications, and employment.

The ministry continues to provide learning opportunities to increase staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of accessibility. Some areas of the ministry have already begun implementing training that focuses on serving customers with specific types of disabilities, such as hearing loss and mental health issues.

To ensure an accessible customer service experience in courts, the Ministry of the Attorney General has been phasing in an Accessibility Coordinator function for courthouses. In early 2009, we will be launching the Accessibility Coordinator function for all full-time court locations. The key purpose of this function is to respond to accommodation requests from persons with disabilities to use and receive services that are provided out of our courthouses. By the beginning of 2010, the ministry will expand this function for all court locations, including satellite and fly-in courts.

Accessibility improvements in buildings, information and communications, and employment all contribute to the overall accessibility of the ministry's services and programs. For example, we are developing Accessibility Design Guidelines that are specific to courthouses, so that we can continue to build accessible design best-practices into all new buildings and major renovation projects. To address communications barriers for people with disabilities, we will be working to improve the availability of sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices and other communications equipment and processes in ministry programs and services.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of the Attorney General to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at the Ministry of Community and Social Services [website](#).

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

This section of the plan focuses on accessible customer service. It provides a report-back on achievements and progress against commitments made in the 2007-2008 ODA plan. It also outlines new commitments and plans for meeting the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulations that came into effect on January 1, 2008.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitments: Complete (Sep 07 to Nov 08)

The ministry made a number of commitments in last year's ODA Accessibility Plan that relate to increasing awareness and providing education on accessibility and getting ready to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation. Specific commitments included:

- Provide accessibility updates and overviews in divisional newsletters and intranet sites.
- Inform and educate staff to increase their level of disability awareness and knowledge on how they can meet the needs of their customers with disabilities.
- Develop, pilot and begin delivery of accessibility education for managers and front-line court services staff. Develop and deliver learning modules that can be incorporated into conferences and learning events, or as stand-alone lunch and learn sessions.
- Include customer service training for front-line staff in divisional training plans.
- Provide accessibility training to receptionist and public enquiry staff that work with the public – including refresher training on answering the ministry's TTY line.
- Engage the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee as well as organizations that provide education for the Judiciary and the Bar, and promote and advise on the development of accessibility education.

Results Achieved:

In the past year, the ministry has been increasing accessibility awareness and providing accessibility education on a number of fronts. The following specific achievements

establish a foundation for implementing the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and enhancing accessibility in other areas:

- Information sessions on the ministry's responsibilities about accessibility and new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service have been provided to all divisional management committees and the ministry's senior management committee.
- Deputy Attorney General Town Hall meetings with staff, held in various locations across the ministry in 2008, have highlighted accessibility as one of the ministry's priorities.
- The "May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" on-line training course has been made available to all staff across the ministry. This course, developed for use with government ministry employees, provides a good introduction to accessibility, and a basis upon which ministry-specific training can be provided in the future. Some areas in the ministry have asked that all staff take this training (e.g., Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Court Services Division). Other areas have required customer-facing staff to take the training (e.g., program staff of the Policy and Family Justice Services Division, and public enquiry staff in Communications Branch). As of August 31, 2008, 990 ministry employees have taken this course.
- Some areas of the ministry have provided additional or alternate training and orientation, and information resources or procedures on accessibility. For example:
 - o The Ontario Victim Services Secretariat (OVSS) has trained staff, province-wide, on providing better service to clients and staff with mood disorders. Another session was provided on the intersection between mental health issues, addictions and victimization of women in domestic violence situations.
 - o The policy manual for Victim / Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) includes specific responsibilities, procedures and guidance for accommodating clients with disabilities. VWAP staff have been reminded to incorporate these policies into their work.
 - o Information on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* is included in the Ontario Public and Guardian Trustee's employee orientation package. Annual training is provided to front line guardian services staff on how to provide effective service to clients with a disability. In addition, a specific mental-health training component has been implemented.
 - o Accessibility learning modules have been incorporated into the manager and supervisor learning events in Court Services Division (CSD). As well, accessibility customer service training sessions were piloted with court support

staff in the Toronto Region. The pilot received positive feedback, with a few suggestions for enhancements. These suggestions will be incorporated into the ministry-wide training strategy to be implemented in order to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation.

- o The ministry's Communications Branch continues to provide training (including refresher training) to public enquiry staff on using TTY equipment and how to provide ministry-specific TTY service to clients.
- o The Human Resources Branch has made information resources about accessibility available on their intranet page.
- The Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee has undertaken discussions with organizations, which provide education to the Judiciary, the Bar, and law students, and has drafted a proposal to develop curricula on accessibility for these audiences.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Completed (Sep 07 to Nov 08)

Court Services Division (CSD) has been phasing in an accessibility coordinator function in courthouses. The key purpose of this function is to respond to accommodation requests from persons with disabilities to use and receive court services. In 2007, Court Services Division piloted this function in seven court locations across the province (Phase 1).

In the 2007 – 2008 ODA Accessibility Plan, the CSD committed to the following:

- Evaluate the pilot project to designate an accessibility coordinator in seven court locations across the province.
- Develop a strategy to expand the function to all courthouses.
- Develop additional reference and support materials on providing accommodation to people with a wide range of disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The pilot project (Phase 1) was evaluated, and a strategy was developed to phase in implementation of the function in all court locations. Phase 2 will implement the function across 87 full-time courts.

Phase 2 is well underway. To ensure effective implementation, a steering committee was established with representation from the Accessibility Unit, Court Services Division, Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Criminal Law Division and Offices of the Chief

Justices. Between October and December 2008, training was provided to the designated Accessibility Coordinators and others. This training included procedures and roles and responsibilities for responding to requests for accommodation in a timely and effective manner.

In early 2009, the Accessibility Coordinator function will be communicated to ministry staff and clients. Ministry clients include, for example, judges, lawyers, service providers, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (police and correctional services), the public, and organizations that provide service to or represent people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Court Services Division will implement the Accessibility Coordinator function for the remaining 96 satellite and fly-in court locations (Phase 3), so that the service is available for all court locations.

Planned Action(s):

Complete Phase 2 of the Accessibility Coordinator project by evaluating the Accessibility Coordinator function that was put in place in all full time courts.

Develop and implement a plan to expand the service to the remaining satellite and fly-in court locations.

Liaise with service providers that could provide assistance in meeting accommodation requests.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the communications about the service and update as necessary.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 to March 2010

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

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Court Services Division (CSD) will update information about accessibility features at each courthouse on the ministry's website and other in publications. Information includes, for example, the availability of accessible entrances, accessible washroom facilities, assistive listening equipment, and who to contact about accessibility-related

needs. This information will be available so that people can familiarize themselves with the availability of accessibility features in advance of arriving at the courthouse.

Planned Actions:

CSD has begun implementing this commitment. A review of current courthouse accessibility features has been completed. Based on this review, CSD will update the information on the ministry's website, and make this information available to the public and ministry staff through other publications and communications channels.

Implementation Timeframe: August 2008 to March 2009

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

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Building on a foundation of knowledge and awareness about accessibility, the ministry will develop and implement a plan to ensure compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation by January 1, 2010.

Planned Action(s):

Conduct divisional and ministry-wide assessments of readiness to implement the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation. This includes reviewing how the ministry provides its main services to people with disabilities, in order to determine where customer service barriers and gaps exist. This will inform the implementation plan for complying with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Establish ministry-specific policies, procedures and practices on providing services to people with disabilities, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Communicating with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability.
- Permitting people to be accompanied by their guide dogs or other service animals on ministry premises.
- Permitting people to use their support persons when using or receiving ministry services.
- Providing notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities may rely on to access ministry services are temporarily disrupted.
- Establishing a public feedback and complaints mechanism on service to people with disabilities.

Develop and implement a ministry-wide educational strategy for providing accessible customer service that outlines who needs training, on what topics and content, and when and how training will be provided. The training strategy will initially focus on training for staff and other third parties that interact with the public on behalf of the ministry, or who are involved in developing policies, procedures, and practices on the provision of services. The training strategy will build upon accessible customer service training already provided within divisions, and will include content that is specific to any ministry policies, programs and services.

In addition to a ministry-wide educational strategy, some divisions and areas of the ministry have plans for training on accessibility in the coming year:

- The Criminal Law Division will be incorporating accessibility modules in their 2009 learning events (e.g., Spring Conference, Provincial Prosecutors' Conference, and the Provincial Support Staff seminar).
- The Ontario Victim Services Secretariat will be collaborating with the Canadian Hearing Society to implement province-wide training on customer service to people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. In 2009, more training will also be provided to staff on providing service to clients with mood disorders.
- The Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee office will be training front desk, reception and storefront staff, using the "May I Help You" on-line training.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 - March 2010

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

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will develop specialized training and resources for court staff and justice sector stakeholders to enable delivery of service to clients who have neurological disabilities, mental health disabilities, developmental disabilities, or acquired brain injuries.

Planned Action(s):

Assess current practices in the ministry, in Ontario and other jurisdictions, and consult with interested and affected parties about what specialized supports may be needed for court users and other ministry clients who have neurological disabilities, mental health disabilities, developmental disabilities, or acquired brain injuries.

Develop a phased implementation plan that may include training, information resources, and related policies or procedures.

Implementation Timeframes: January 2009 to March 2010

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

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan the ministry committed to build accessibility considerations into all policy development/review and planning processes that affect court operations.

Results achieved:

Court Services Division is conducting a jury project, which will examine jury management policies and practices. Accessibility considerations related to jurors or potential jurors with disabilities has been incorporated in the planning and development stages of the jury project.

Planned Action(s):

Once the review is complete, policies and procedures will be updated and enhanced to create accessibility and remove or prevent barriers so that all members of society, including people with disabilities, have the opportunity to serve and take part in the jury system.

Implementation Timeframes: September 2008 – March 2010

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment:** Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan the ministry committed to the following:

- To integrate accessibility into business practices, programs and services; and
- To review accessibility issues as acts and regulations are under review, being updated or developed.

These broad commitments are ongoing. The objective is to address accessibility issues during policy and planning processes, when legislation is being updated or reviewed, and during project planning – so that no new barriers are created, and existing barriers are addressed. It not only supports the implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, but also other areas of accessibility.

Results achieved:

The Policy and Family Justice Services Division (PFJSD) has begun an initiative to increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the Supervised Access Program. This involves working with third party service providers to increase the accessibility of services that they provide on behalf of the ministry. Third-party service providers have been asked to address accessibility in their funding proposals this year.

The Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) has identified a number of accessibility issues that pertain to third party contractors that deal with ministry clients. A plan to address these and related issues has been developed.

Planned Action(s):

In 2009, PFJSD plans to develop best practices for accessibility in Supervised Access programs, and ensure that service agreements with third party providers reflect accessibility requirements.

By 2010, the OPGT will review provisions in Ontario statutes that affect OPGT service delivery for the public, to identify barriers for people with disabilities.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, the ministry's Accessibility Unit will develop a set of tools and training for staff to see the work that they do from an accessibility perspective. The tools will assist staff, at a practical level, to implement accessibility as a part of operational planning, and when designing, developing or reviewing legislation, policies, or programs.

Implementation Timeframes: October 2008 to March 2010.

Other Accessibility Commitments

This section identifies new initiatives and provides a status report on completed or multi-year initiatives that are currently underway in other areas of accessibility (the built environment, employment, and information and communications).

Focus Area: Customer Service Built Environment Employment Information and Communications

Impact: Act Regulation Policy Program Service

Commitments: Completed (Sep 07 – Nov 08)

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry committed to the following:

- Conduct research, analyses and present options and recommendations to senior management regarding sector and ministry accessibility best practices and implementation.
- Prepare an Accessibility Plan as part of the ministry's annual planning process.
- Coordinate and facilitate stakeholder group input and feedback regarding accessibility plans, programs and policies.

Results Achieved:

In addition to our annual ODA plan, the ministry has developed and is finalizing a multi-year Accessibility Strategic Plan. This plan will help to ensure that the ministry is prepared to implement accessibility standards. The strategic plan includes recommended outcomes, performance indicators, strategies and actions for achieving accessibility in a range of areas across the ministry.

The strategic planning process has included research on best practice approaches for improving accessibility generally and within the justice sector. The ministry has consulted with the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee on the strategic plan. This committee includes representatives of people with disabilities, as well as representatives of the ministry, judiciary, and legal profession.

Specific ministry projects have also included input from disability stakeholders. For example:

- The Facilities Management Branch has consulted with people with disabilities and organizations in the development of Courthouse Wayfinding and Signage Standards.

These standards will guide the design of signage to make it easier for everyone, including people with disabilities, to find their way around courthouses.

- The Ontario Victim Services Secretariat worked with the CNIB to conduct an assessment of the Ottawa courthouse and the Victim Witness Assistance Program. This assessment will inform future implementation plans for improving access to their services for people who are blind and visually impaired.

In addition to commitments made in last year's ODA plan, the ministry has established an Accessibility Executive Steering Committee to guide accessibility planning and provide advice on accessibility-related initiatives and projects – including the development of the Accessibility Strategic Plan.

The Ontario Victim Services Secretariat has established a province-wide staff committee to develop strategies for increasing customer service for people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Customer Service Built Environment Employment Information and Communications

Impact: Act Regulation Policy Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will improve opportunities for the engagement of people with disabilities and others in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

Planned Action(s):

Implement a plan for the ministry to consult with customers and ministry employees who have a disability and others on an ongoing basis.

Continue to co-chair and provide support to the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee (OCAC), and continue to consult with the OCAC on the Accessibility Strategic Plan and key initiatives.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2008 – March 2010

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

Focus Area: Customer Service Built Environment Employment Information and Communications

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Completed (Sep 07 – Nov 08)

The ministry committed to providing accessibility guidance to program managers and supervisors in all procurement activities, as required by Section 5 of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Results Achieved:

The ministry's Controllershship Unit has incorporated accessibility resources and advice as a part of supporting the ministry's procurement processes. This includes:

- Distributing Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA to the Directors Strategic Resource Group, and posting relevant materials on the ministry's intranet site as a staff resource.
- Providing ongoing accessible procurement advice to program areas when reviewing proposed procurements.
- Ensuring the ministry's procurement training material and on-line training package contains accessibility information and requirements.

Focus Area: Customer Service Built Environment Employment Information and Communications

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In the 2007-2008 ODA Accessibility Plan, the ministry committed to consider accessibility requirements as part of the Results-based Planning process -- the process the government uses for resource planning (staff, funding).

Results Achieved:

All divisions of the ministry were required to incorporate accessibility requirements in their Results-based Plan proposals in the fall of 2008.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry committed to the following on an ongoing basis:

- Applying the most effective barrier-free design principles to all capital and accommodation projects where feasible and appropriate.
- Developing and/or reviewing barrier-free best practices to support the *Provincial Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses* – specifically, for 2007 to 2008 Facilities Management Branch committed to developing best practices for the requirements for the judges' dais, witness box and jury box as well as developing best practices for barrier-free public counters.

Results Achieved:

To support the ongoing application of the most effective barrier-free or accessible design principles and the development of best practices for courthouses, the Facilities Management Branch (FMB) is in the process of developing the following best-practices guidelines and standards: Accessibility Design Guidelines for courthouses in Ontario; and Courthouse Way-finding Signage Standard.

Accessibility Design Guidelines: The development of the Accessibility Design Guidelines for courthouses is underway. These guidelines will establish accessibility best practices requirements for new construction, and provide guidance for upgrades to existing courthouses. Among other things, the guidelines will include best practices for the judges' dais, witness box, jury box, and public counters. Once complete, these guidelines will support the *Provincial Architectural Design Standards for Courthouses*. A consulting team, which includes members with accessibility expertise, has been hired, and plans are in place to consult with people with disabilities during the development of these guidelines.

Courthouse Wayfinding Signage Standard: A draft of the Courthouse Wayfinding Signage Standard has been completed, which incorporates best practices for accessible signage and way-finding to make it easier for everyone, including people with disabilities to find their way around courthouses. During the development of this draft, people with disabilities were consulted in order to understand the way-finding and signage needs of a broad range of people with disabilities. The draft standard will be piloted through a signage installation at the Barrie courthouse. The pilot will be evaluated, and the standard will be finalized to incorporate the experience from the pilot.

Consultants with expertise on way-finding, signage and accessibility were retained to develop the standard and implement the pilot.

Planned Actions:

Accessibility Design Guidelines: The ministry plans to finalize the Accessibility Design Guidelines for courthouses in the winter of 2009.

Courthouse Way-finding Signage Standard: The ministry plans to finalize the Courthouse Way-finding Signage Standard in the spring of 2009.

Implementation Timeframes: January 2008 – June 2009

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry committed to the following ongoing commitments:

- Incorporating and addressing accessibility as a component of its annual Infrastructure Plan requests (i.e. accessibility to be factored into project scoping and costing) and in-year planning process for accommodation and capital projects (e.g., entrance ways, judges' dais, washrooms, public counters).
- Ensuring that all Requests for Proposals (RFP) that are issued by the Ontario Realty Corporation for consultants retained to deliver capital and accommodation projects include a requirement for all proponents to demonstrate experience in the design and construction of barrier-free facilities.

Results Achieved:

To support ministry staff on methods of incorporating accessibility in planning and construction, the ministry's Facilities Management Branch held an accessibility workshop. The workshop included training on the new building code updates on barrier-free design, as well as tours of CNIB and Bloorview Kids Rehab to see accessibility best practices first hand.

Additionally, a presentation on "Building an Accessible Justice System" was provided to facility staff across the province at the annual Regional Accommodation Workshops held in the spring of 2008.

On an ongoing basis, the ministry builds accessibility into infrastructure planning and project implementation. One of the ways that this is achieved is by including a

requirement in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for all proponents to demonstrate experience in the design and construction of barrier-free facilities. As a result, consulting teams include experience in accessible design and construction.

Examples of projects that are underway or were completed in the past year where accessibility was incorporated include:

- *New Courthouse projects*: A number of courthouses are currently being planned for or are under construction that will incorporate accessibility best practices (Durham, Waterloo Region, Quinte, St. Thomas, and Thunder Bay). These projects involve replacing old, deficient, inaccessible and fragmented courts with newly constructed and accessible courthouses to meet the demands of a modern justice system.
- *Osgoode Hall, Toronto*: The entrance of Osgoode Hall is currently being upgraded to provide barrier-free access through the front of the building. To ensure that the heritage value of this building was respected throughout this project, architects with extensive heritage and accessibility expertise were engaged. As well, a wide range of stakeholders with diverse perspectives on accessibility and heritage features were consulted.
- *361 University Avenue, Toronto*: The ceremonial courtroom was renovated for accessibility including a lift for the witness box and judges' dais, barrier-free jury box, counsel tables and public seating, new and improved sound system, and improved lighting levels.
- *Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, Toronto*: Accessibility best practices were applied to the new space for the Human Rights Tribunal (an agency of the Ministry of the Attorney General), and three of the seven hearing rooms are barrier-free.
- *Northumberland County Courthouse, Cobourg*: A new Ontario Courts of Justice courtroom is currently under construction at the Northumberland County Courthouse and is designed to be barrier-free, including wider aisles, and barrier-free public seating and judges' dais.
- *Crown Attorney Office, Brampton*: Accessibility was incorporated into the redesign of the Crown Attorney space in the Brampton Courthouse to accommodate new staff and support business requirements.
- *Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee offices*: New construction and/or renovations in offices of the Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee locations in Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, London and Toronto have incorporated accessibility.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry committed to the following: Each time a lease renewal is reviewed, accessibility requirements are considered and communicated to the Ontario Realty Corporation.

Results Achieved:

The ministry continues to consider accessibility requirements into lease renewal and negotiations and to notify the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) of these requirements.

Planned Actions:

The Facilities Management Branch will develop an accessibility checklist to support negotiations with the Ontario Realty Corporation and building owners on accessibility enhancements to be incorporated at the time of new or renewed leases.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will prepare a multi-year accessibility plan to make all of Ontario's government-owned courthouses accessible to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The Facilities Management Branch will audit a representative sample of courthouses against the Accessibility Design Guidelines in order to determine the amount of work and costs to make accessibility improvements.

Facilities Management Branch, working with all divisions, will incorporate the results of the accessibility audit into a multi-year plan to make government owned courthouses accessible.

Implementation Timeframe: April 2009 – March 2010

Results Achieved: Interim results will be reported on in next year's ODA plan.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will reduce and prevent barriers faced by people with multiple chemical sensitivities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will be developing new cleaning standards for ministry-occupied spaces. Facilities Management Branch, working with the Ministry's Accommodation Council, will be developing these standards. Issues around cleaning agents and practices that may trigger adverse reactions in people with multiple-chemical sensitivities will be considered as a part of this process.

Implementation Timeframes: September 2008 – March 10

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

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will review its security systems, procedures and equipment to identify barriers and solutions relating to independent access by persons with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will review its security systems to identify barriers to persons with disabilities, and establish priorities for addressing barriers. The ministry will establish a plan to modify security systems as necessary, and priorities will be incorporated into annual infrastructure planning.

Accessibility impacts for people with disabilities will be assessed as a part of the ministry's security planning process for all facilities. Where necessary, measures will be put in place to prevent or address barriers to independent access by people with disabilities that may result as a part of enhanced security systems and procedures.

To support this, Court Services Division will develop accessibility guidance on meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in court security planning and the provision of security services. The division will work with the ministry's Facilities Management

Branch, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and others on these guidelines. A plan will be developed to implement the guidelines in all courthouses.

Implementation Timeframes: April 2009 – March 2010

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

Focus Area: Built Environment Employment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: Completed (Sep 07 to Nov 08)

In last year's plan, the Emergency Management Unit committed to implementing the Employee Evacuation Assistance Self-Identification program for employees with disabilities, including the development of a guide to assist managers to support the self-identified employees.

Results Achieved:

In September 2008, the self-identification program was communicated to all ministry staff. As well, a new ministry emergency Hotline was established that provides increased capacity to communicate immediate emergency-related information across the province, and is accessible by TTY.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Act Regulation Policy Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry committed to supporting the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in meeting requirements under the AODA, including the province-wide accessible built environment standard (currently under development).

Results Achieved:

The ministry's Facilities Management Branch has participated on a ministry-wide committee to support government members who participate on the Built Environment Standards Development Committee.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to support the development of AODA standards in the area of the built environment.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Policy Program Service

Commitment: Completed (Sep 07 to Nov 08)

All new material posted to the ministry's website will continue to be accessible by people with disabilities, including the availability of materials in alternative formats, as required by Section 6 of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Results Achieved:

From October 1, 2007 to August 28, 2008, the ministry's Communications Branch posted 58 new releases, accompanied by 41 backgrounders / fact sheets, four brochures, 13 reports / guidelines / applications, and new materials about court interpreter services. All of these are accessible and were available in alternate formats at the same time as traditional formats were released.

Focus Area: Information and Communications**Impact: Policy Program Service****Commitment: Completed (Sep 07 to Nov 08)**

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 the following:

- text reader technology,
- ease of navigation for people who rely on alternative pointing devices,
- graphics supported by alternative 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.

Results Achieved:

- On an ongoing basis, the ministry's Communications Branch ensures that the ministry's website is accessible in keeping with the above commitment. For example, the Justice on Target section of the ministry's website, which includes complex graphics components, has been made accessible. As well, the articling student applications have been posted on the website and are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Although not initially planned for, the ministry's Communications Branch has also included a page on the ministry's website, which describes the accessibility features of the site.
- As well, the Human Rights Legal Support Centre and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (agencies of the Ministry of the Attorney General) launched new websites that are W3C compliant and include materials in alternate formats.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Policy Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will increase the accessibility of written communication by or with the ministry.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry's Communications Branch will develop guidance resources and provide training on creating accessible documents (including electronic documents) and alternate formats.

Implementation Timeframes: January 2009 -March 2010

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

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Policy Program Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will increase the accessibility of its intranet sites to employees with disabilities, and continue to enhance the accessibility features of its Internet website.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry's Communications Branch will coordinate a community of webmasters within MAG, to share learning and best practices on web accessibility while awaiting OPS-wide intranet standards.

Implementation Timeframes: November 2008 – March 2010

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

Focus Area: Information and Communications**Impact: Policy Program Service****Commitment: New**

The ministry will increase the use of plain language in ministry internal and external communications.

Results Achieved:

The ministry has already begun implementation on this initiative. The ministry developed a plain-language training program that provided training to approximately 200 ministry employees. The training program received the first Cabinet Office Communications “Spotlight” award for excellence in leadership across the Ontario Public Service.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry's Communications Branch will provide plain language advice on an ongoing basis for using plain language in a range of ministry documents, including but not limited to, documents on legal matters.

In 2009, all divisions in the ministry will use plain language to the extent possible in all new documents, and will develop a schedule for reviewing existing ministry documents to improve plain language.

Implementation Timeframes: November 2008 – March 2010**Results Achieved:** To be reported on in next year's ODA plan.

Focus Area: Information and Communications**Impact: Service****Commitment: New**

The ministry will enhance the provision of sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, assistive technology, and human services that will help to address information and communication barriers for people with disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The ministry has already begun implementing this commitment. During the past year:

- The Ontario Victim Services Secretariat (OVSS) investigated assistive communication technology (e.g., TTY equipment and software, Braille printer) to improve communications with people who are blind, deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.
- The Belleville Victim / Witness Assistance Program office installed a TTY, and related training was provided to staff by the Canadian Hearing Society.
- Court Services Division (CSD) has researched assistive listening devices for use in courthouses (types and numbers that currently exist in courthouses, gaps in availability).
- CSD and OVSS are in the process of purchasing Braille printers.
- The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario incorporated assistive listening devices in all hearing rooms, and have implemented TTY software for communicating with their clients who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The Human Rights Legal Support Centre launched their new services with TTY capacity.

Planned Action(s):

In addition to work already complete, the ministry plans to undertake the following:

- CSD will develop and communicate policies and procedures for producing court documents in Braille.
- CSD will develop and implement a strategy to enhance the availability of sign language interpreters in courts.
- OVSS will put in place TTY technology to enable telephone communication with people who are deaf. An intake process for clients who use TTYs will be developed and implemented in OVSS offices across the province.
- CSD will improve the availability of assistive listening devices in courthouses.

- Based on the lessons learned and experiences from the above planned actions, the ministry will develop a multi-year strategy to deploy assistive communications equipment, and related policies and procedures across the ministry.

Implementation Timeframes: September 2008 – March 2010

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program Service

Commitments: Complete (Sept 07 to Nov 08)

In last year's ODA plan, the ministry made the following employment-related commitments:

- To promote accessibility of the workplace for people with disabilities by providing relevant tools and supports to managers and supervisors in accommodating their staff;
- To accommodate the accessibility needs of employees and job applicants by providing manager and supervisor training regarding employment accommodation;
- To communicate the need for all new managers and supervisors to complete the on-line ODA e-learning training as a part of the orientation process;
- To communicate to managers and supervisors about the development of a new Ontario Public Service Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy, along with accompanying tools, which are available on the Ontario Public Service intranet; and
- To communicate and make available to managers and supervisors a guide to writing barrier-free employment advertisements. Human Resources staff will be available to answer questions from managers and supervisors regarding the guide and its application.

Results Achieved:

An accessibility section of the ministry's Human Resources intranet site was launched in the spring of 2008. It contains relevant information resources about accessibility.

The Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy was provided to managers and supervisors in March 2007. The policy and related materials are posted on the Human Resources intranet site. Human Resources staff regularly provide advice to managers and employees on this policy.

The guide on writing barrier-free employment advertisements was communicated across the ministry in July 2007. The guide is also available on the OPS Careers

website. A discussion on barrier-free employment advertisements with managers and recruitment centre consultants is included at the start of the recruitment process.

The Human Resources website includes checklists for new manager orientation which recommend that new managers take the government's on-line accessibility training. The website also includes links to the ministry's ODA plan to inform managers about the ministry's commitments and plans for increasing accessibility.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

In addition to implementing accommodations for ministry employees with disabilities, Court Services Division will work with Offices of the Chief Justices to develop a process to meet the employment-related accommodation needs of judges and justices of the peace.

Implementation Timeframes: April 2009 – March 2010

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

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

As part of the broader diversity strategy, the ministry's Diversity Committee will develop strategies for increasing awareness of diversity issues and ensuring the workplace is barrier-free and inclusive for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Implementation Timeframes: November 2008 – March 2010

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

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy Program Service

Commitment: New

In follow-up to the 2009 Ontario Public Service Employee Engagement Survey, the Human Resources Branch will gather information about why employees with disabilities in the ministry are or are not engaged in their jobs.

Implementation Timeframes: April 2009 – March 2010

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

For More Information

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

Please phone:

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

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