

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



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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 Community and Social Services' sixth annual accessibility plan highlights achievements in 2007-2008 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.

The ministry has continued to focus on playing a leadership role in raising awareness about accessibility for its own staff, for staff working in other parts of the Ontario government and for the broader public.

In May 2007 to celebrate National Access Awareness Week, the ministry hosted a series of accessibility expos in Toronto and in each of the ministry's nine regions. This year's theme for the expos was "Accessibility is Everyone's Business". The expos used interactive exhibits and informative workshops to demonstrate good customer service practices for people with disabilities. Exhibits at the event at Queen's Park featured displays from a number of Ontario Public Service (OPS) partners, including the Information and Information Technology Cluster's Accessibility Centre of Excellence, the OPS Diversity Office, and the Youth and New Professionals Secretariat. The expos also featured a number of hands-on demonstrations from the Ontario Association of the Deaf, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and Bell Relay Services. Staff from across the OPS learned that good customer service benefits everyone and that public servants need to be leaders in making Ontario accessible to people with disabilities

As part of its broader awareness raising mandate, the ministry launched a province-wide public awareness campaign based on AccessON. AccessON is an internet site designed to raise awareness among the public, the business community and the broader public sector, about the barriers that exist for people with disabilities. In 2008, this transit advertisement was featured in communities across Ontario including Toronto, Barrie, Brampton, Burlington, Durham Region, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Mississauga, Niagara Falls, North Bay, Oakville, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, St Catharines, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Waterloo Region, Windsor, York Region.

To complement its awareness raising efforts, the ministry has continued to focus on education for staff about how to provide good service to customers with disabilities. In 2007-08, the ministry provided training to over 1700 staff working in Service Ontario. Staff working within the Ministry of Community and Social Services have also benefited from a range of training opportunities designed to enhance the service experience for customers with disabilities. All ministry staff supporting the Ontario Disability Support Program are required to complete the Access, Awareness and Accountability training. In addition, as of October 2008, 85 per cent of ministry managers and supervisors had completed the on-line Maximizing the Contribution of Employees and Applicants with Disabilities training.

This year, the ministry actively consulted with staff in the development of its Accessibility Plan. Over 50 employees, including employees with disabilities volunteered to provide their insight and experience in the development of the 2008-2009 MCSS Accessibility Plan.

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, all government ministries develop annual accessibility plans to make 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 Community and Social Services 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:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans09.htm

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into force on January 1, 2008. All Ontario Public Service ministries must comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by January 1, 2010.

The standards state what businesses and other organizations in Ontario must do to provide accessible goods and services to people with disabilities.

Being treated with dignity and providing equal opportunity and access to goods and services is critical to daily living for Ontarians with disabilities. All organizations that provide goods or services and that have at least one employee will need to comply with the standard's requirements.

This is the first of five standards that will lead to an accessible Ontario for people with disabilities by 2025.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Completed

The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit (formerly the Human Resources Branch) will include information about disability and accessibility on its orientation intranet site.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Nov 08

Results Achieved: The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit has updated two key accessibility resources and made the resources available on its orientation intranet site.

Accommodating People with Disabilities: We All Share the Responsibility provides important information to staff about the ministry's responsibility to effectively accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

Employment Accommodation: Responsibilities of Ministry Staff describes the responsibilities of ministry staff in ensuring that employees and applicants with disabilities receive timely and effective disability-related accommodations.

In addition, new links to on-line accessibility resources have been added to both documents.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Completed

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will launch new tools to support the Ontario Public Service and organizations in the area of the customer service regulation. The tools include a multi-media tool box and a series of video modules.

Planned Action: The ministry will develop multi-media tools, including a DVD and video series, to assist in customer service standards training.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Sept 08

Results Achieved: The multi-media DVD "An Accessible Ontario: It's just good business!" was completed and segments were posted on AccessON in spring 2008. It is available at <http://accesson.ca/ado/english/video/index>.

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

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will develop a new public awareness campaign based on AccessON. AccessON is an internet site designed to raise awareness among the public, the business community and the broader public sector, about the barriers that exist for people with disabilities. It also provides tools to help businesses comply with accessibility standards.

Planned Actions: The ministry has selected an advertising agency and plans are underway to build and implement a strategy to expand the AccessON public awareness campaign. A public awareness campaign will be launched in 2009. The ministry will work to restructure the AccessON website to allow visitors to find success stories, tips and resources with greater ease.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: In 2008, a transit advertisement campaign was launched province wide (Toronto, Barrie, Brampton, Burlington, Durham Region, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Mississauga, Niagara Falls, North Bay, Oakville, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, St Catharines, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Waterloo Region, Windsor, York Region). The campaign is now complete.

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

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will establish an outreach strategy for the ministry's transfer payment agencies to promote readiness for compliance with the regulation on customer service.

Planned Action: The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will work with the Ministry of Government Services' Diversity Office to deliver presentations to Ontario Public Service leaders on the customer service standard and how it will impact their sectors. The aim is to get their support to work with their respective agencies and stakeholders.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 - Mar 10

Results Achieved: Information was developed to educate staff on customer service standards. Presentations to Ontario Public Service leaders started in fall 2008 and will be completed by spring 2009.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will launch a supplementary module to the “May I Help You?” e-learning course. The *Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service* e-learning module will be made available to staff working in the Ontario Public Service.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to promote the use of “May I Help You?” and the “May I Help You?” supplementary, *Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service*, e-training within the Ontario Public Service.

The two modules will provide 1.5 hours of e-learning to Ontario Public Service staff on customer service and meets the requirements of the customer service standard.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Part one of “May I Help You?” is currently the number one subscribed learning course on the Centre for Leadership and Learning website. As of September 30, 2008, there have been 1258 staff from the Ministry of Community and Social Services that have completed the “May I Help You?” e-learning module.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) will hold training sessions for Service Ontario staff on how to provide good customer service to people with disabilities.

Planned Action: The ADO will continue to host a variety of training sessions to help Service Ontario staff provide good service to customers with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Training sessions for Service Ontario staff were held from November 2007 to May 2008, in five locations throughout the province.

Over 1700 Service Ontario staff have been trained on how to provide good customer service.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will develop a facilitator's guide to support staff training and development. The guide provides exercises, tools and information on six major disabilities and has information on how to interact with people with those disabilities. The guide also provides a tool for trainers to carry out classroom-based training on serving customers with disabilities.

Planned Action: To publish a facilitator's guide to support staff training and development. The guide will be available in December 2008.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Dec 08

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will develop interpretive guidelines and a workbook to assist public organizations with compliance with the regulation on accessible customer service.

Planned Action: The interpretive manual will be released in December 2008.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Dec 08

Results Achieved: The guide was completed and posted on the AccessON.ca website in January 2008.

An interpretive manual was also developed to help organizations understand the regulation requirements for accessible customer service. It offers practical advice and instructions on how to comply with requirements outlined by the interpretive guidelines.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will provide Access, Awareness and Accountability training to all new Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) staff and other ministry staff and managers as appropriate. Access, Awareness and Accountability training is a one-day workshop designed to develop a heightened awareness in staff of the issues which people with disabilities face.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to provide Access, Awareness and Accountability training to all new Ontario Disability Support Program staff and other ministry staff where appropriate. There is one session scheduled for 2008-2009 for new ODSP staff.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Five sessions were held in 2007-2008 benefiting 121 ministry staff.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will explore alternatives for enhancing teletypewriter (TTY) services in keeping with the Ontario Public Service Quality Service Standards.

Planned Action: The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will continue to explore ways to enhance TTY services offered by the Ontario government.

The findings will be presented in fall 2009 to the Cluster Management Committee.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: Initial findings were analyzed and the result was to continue exploring alternatives for enhancing existing TTY services.

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

The ministry will continue to assess and make plans to improve the accessibility of ministry offices and facilities for staff and clients with disabilities.

Planned Action: As changes to an existing or new site are required, the location will be built to the current building code that includes elements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and also the new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) customer service requirements, with a view to enhancing the accessibility of our offices.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has completed a number of projects which have enhanced accessibility for staff and clients with disabilities. The completed projects include:

- Ontario Disability Support Program offices in Brockville (relocation to new space), Kirkland Lake (alterations), and Woodstock (new accessible counter) - all with improvements to the front counter area to enhance customer service and accessibility for clients and staff;

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

The ministry will develop a pilot project on the use of remote video sign language interpreter services.

Planned Action: The ministry will develop a feasibility study to determine if a remote video conferencing sign language interpreter service could be provided for clients throughout the province.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

The ministry will support further enhancements to the Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT) to support the customer service standards.

Planned Action: The ministry will promote the enhancements of service flags within the SDMT system to ensure staff are responsive to clients needs.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will track and respond to requests for material in alternative formats, for example Braille or large print.

Planned Action: The Social Assistance and Municipal Operations Branch will track the number of requests that are made for documentation in alternative formats for various ministry communications. The results from the tracking will allow for the ministry to proactively produce materials in these formats.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will demonstrate its commitment to an accessible customer service experience by promoting its accommodations policy and supporting clients in accessing accessible customer service.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to promote its accommodations policy.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will establish local accessibility groups to champion accessibility across the organization and to champion D-Net, a staff network group that promotes accessibility.

Planned Actions: The ministry will support the development of local accessibility networks to act as champions throughout the province. The ministry will also support D-Net in the development of their network group at a local level. The ministry's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has agreed to be the Executive Sponsor of D-Net.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, customer service regulation, the ministry will post detailed information about renovations to its offices.

Planned Action: The ministry will notify staff and clients of any renovations that may occur in the building in a timely fashion by posting the information in a visible area.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will establish a working group made up of ministry staff and stakeholders to promote a broader understanding of disability and accessibility issues.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to work with its transfer payment agencies to promote an accessible Ontario, as well as determining ways to reduce barriers for persons with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will provide its documents in accessible formats and in plain language with the goal of promoting a more positive customer service experience.

Planned Action: The ministry will ensure all public documents are available in accessible formats and are written in plain language. Specific documents that would be revised would be the Mandatory Special Benefits Request and Special Diet forms.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will encourage staff to take plain language training and “ May I Help You?” e-learning.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to promote staff to take training that will help in their understanding of providing accessible customer service. The ministry’s Business Planning and Corporate Services Division has required all staff to complete “May I Help You” training by March 31, 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) builds on the foundation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). Through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards, the province is making progress towards its goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025.

The AODA applies to the Ontario Public Service (OPS) and the broader public sector, as well as the private sector and not-for-profit sector.

In the near future, the OPS will be obligated to comply with the four remaining accessibility standards in the areas of transportation, information and communication, employment and the built environment.

This section identifies new initiatives and provides a status report on completed or multi-year initiatives that are currently underway.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Completed

The ministry will conduct a review of the internal administration processes associated with the Ontario Public Service Employment Accommodation Fund for Employees with Disabilities to identify opportunities for improvement and to promote awareness about the fund. This fund allows managers to apply for reimbursement of approved costs of accommodating employees and applicants with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: June 08 – July 08

Results Achieved: The ministry fund coordinator completed a review of ministry administration of the Ontario Public Service Employment Accommodation Fund for Employees with Disabilities. The fund coordinator's report recommends some new ministry processes to make the fund application process easier for managers and to reduce the time needed to manage the fund.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Completed

The ministry will take a leadership role in supporting commitments emerging from the Ministry of Government Services-led consultation with Ontario Public Service Human Resource directors.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – August 08

Results Achieved: No ministry-based initiatives arose from this commitment during 2007-2008.

Focus Area Other

Commitment: Completed

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will develop an accessibility lens, including a framework with overarching principles and accompanying tools that can be applied specifically to policy, legislation and program design across the Ontario Public Service (OPS). This will serve to embed accessibility principles in the development and implementation of government initiatives, to help to allow people with a wide range of disabilities to fully participate in daily life in Ontario.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Dec 08

Results Achieved: An accessibility lens has been developed in partnership with the Diversity Office, Ministry of Government Services. The accessibility lens was introduced to the Ontario Public Service staff in November 2008.

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: Completed

The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will support the ministry to implement, promote and support the use of the Plone collaboration tool for users of computer-related assistive devices and applications.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Nov 08

Results Achieved: In cooperation with the Information and Information Technology (I&IT) Accessibility Centre of Excellence, the Human Resources Strategic Business Unit surveyed a sample group of employees with disabilities who use assistive technology to operate their computers. The survey identified unanimous agreement to participate in an assistive technology user group and a preference to use the current email system rather than a collaboration tool as the method of communication at this time. The sample group of employees who use assistive technology was established in November 2007. A coordinator from the I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence will be responsible for establishing the distribution list for the sample group and sending periodic emails to the group that include topics of interest (e.g., quick tips, updates to assistive technology, innovations in assistive technology).

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Completed

The Financial Planning and Business Management Branch will explore the feasibility of implementing a new checklist for procurement with weighted value for accessibility by September 2008.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07- Sept 08

Results Achieved: The new Procurement Directive was published in November 2007. This new directive includes a checklist to allow for inclusion of persons with disabilities as either a mandatory requirement or a rated evaluation criterion where appropriate for the nature of the assignment.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Financial Planning and Business Management Branch will modify the ministry's procurement curriculum to increase awareness of accessibility considerations in procurement.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Dec 08

Results Achieved: A separate topic "Accessibility Tools to Support Procurement" is included in the ministry's draft training curriculum. Training is planned for December 2008.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will promote the Deputy Minister's confidential online suggestion box as a medium for staff to identify barriers and submit suggestions on accessibility.

Planned Action: The suggestion box will remain available to staff as a confidential way to identify any question, concerns or observations related to accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – March 10

Results Achieved: An online accessibility suggestion box was created and launched on December 7, 2007, to solicit ideas from staff on accessibility.

There have been 34 suggestions made to the online suggestion box. To date, suggestions have been made on specific site locations, suggestions for improvement to policy and ideas on how to create a more inclusive work environment. Several of these suggestions have been included as new commitments in the 2008/09 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry's Foundations for Managers Program will include accessibility awareness training. The goal of the Foundations program is to identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of frontline managers.

Planned Action: The Foundations for Managers program will continue to offer a module on inclusiveness and will include information on accessibility. The program will also promote material on "*May I Help You?*" and AccessON.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07- Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The Foundations for Managers Program offered a module on creating a respectful and accessible work environment to ensure managers are aware of their accessibility commitments. To date, 281 staff have benefited from this training.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit will promote the on-line Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) training for managers and supervisors. The training is about accommodating employees and applicants with disabilities.

Planned Action: The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit will inform new managers and supervisors of their obligation to take the training and will monitor their compliance.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: In 2008, the Human Resources Strategic Business Unit encouraged all ministry managers and supervisors to complete the ODA online training currently titled *Maximizing the Contribution of Employees and Applicants with Disabilities*. As of October 2008, 85% of MCSS managers and supervisors had completed the training.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will continue to identify and publish best practices and success stories to promote a blueprint for all organizations that are interested in improving opportunities for people with disabilities.

Planned Action: The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will continue to highlight best practices and publish success stories on their internet site, AccessON (www.accesson.ca).

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: Success stories featuring various accessibility initiatives across Ontario are posted on AccessON every two weeks.

Examples of past features include stories about businesses taking initiative to provide accessible customer service or hiring individuals with disabilities.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Employer Outreach Secretariat will focus on:

- An Employer Awareness Campaign to provide information to employers about the business case for hiring people with disabilities and to dispel myths/facts about people with disabilities;
- An Employer Champions Program to recognize employers that are progressive in hiring people with disabilities; and,
- An employers' symposium in November 2007 that will feature best employer practices in hiring people with disabilities, and recognize leaders in this area.

Planned Actions: The Ministry of Community and Social Services, including the Employer Outreach Secretariat, will:

- Continue to support the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce to enhance employer capacities for, and hiring of, persons with disabilities.
- Implement, in partnership with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, an employer recognition award that recognizes innovation in hiring of person with disabilities.
- Support various regional employer outreach activities, including an outreach campaign and conference by the Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN).
- Hold the second Employers Symposium on Disability and Employment in November 2008.

Implementation Timeframe: Sep 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry worked to encourage employers to hire persons with disabilities through a variety of activities including the following:

- Completed consultations with employers and persons with disabilities that will be used to inform the development of future employer awareness activities.
- Supported the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce to establish the Get Trained Workers initiative (www.gettrainedworkers.com) that posts job opportunities for persons with disabilities and social assistance recipients.
- Held a Symposium on Disability and Employment that provided 100 employer participants with an opportunity to enhance their capacities to recruit and retain persons with disabilities and to recognize employers' best practices.
- In partnership with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME), the ministry supported the "Business Takes Action" project that challenges employers to make people with disabilities 10% of all new hires, and provides tools and advice to CME members on hiring persons with disabilities.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Employer Outreach Secretariat will continue to promote the Human Resources Handbook within the ministry and will develop a Manager's Toolkit for scouting and hiring people with disabilities.

Planned Action: The handbook will undergo an annual review to determine if the content needs updating so that the information can remain relevant and useful in the recruitment of people with disabilities to the government workforce.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The Handbook, *Attracting the Talent: A Handbook for Recruiting People with Disabilities into Ontario Public Service*, was made available to Ontario Public Service managers through the Ministry of Government Services, Human Resources, in 2007.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will promote the availability of training related to accessibility awareness and managers and supervisors will use the learning streams to support staff development.

Planned Action: Regional staff will continue to complete training by March 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: To date, nearly 100 staff have participated in "May I Help You?" customer service training for people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will provide Professional Advancement and Career Education (PACE) training program for all Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) staff and managers.

The ministry developed the Professional Advancement and Career Education (PACE) training program to enrich the skills of staff and managers working with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients. The PACE curriculum focuses on enriching the skills and core competencies necessary to build and develop effective and positive relationships with ODSP clients, colleagues and communities.

Planned Action: All regional sessions will be completed by March 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 09

Results Achieved: To date, over 1400 (89%) ODSP staff and managers have benefited from the PACE training.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will host an Accessibility Expo to raise awareness of the benefits of accessibility by exploring barriers to accessibility and the many ways to overcome these barriers.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to host accessibility expos through out the province to promote National Awareness Week and to promote accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – May 10

Results Achieved: In 2008, the ministry hosted 10 Accessibility Expos throughout the province to promote accessibility. Staff were encouraged to participate in various events, lectures, and tradeshow booths. This year's theme was "Accessibility is Everyone's Business". The goal was to highlight good customer service practices for people with disabilities through interactive exhibits, informative workshops and guest speakers.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry is introducing an e-mail system to improve communication with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients.

Planned Action: This email project has three phases.

In phase one, the ministry will test the system with a small group of ODSP clients and staff beginning in January 2009.

In phase two, based on the results of phase one, the ministry will customize the email system so that it works well with existing ministry technology.

In phase three, the ministry will make the email system available to eligible ODSP clients across the province.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will promote the availability of “Talk About Disabilities – Choose the Right Word” lexicon (www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/how/howto_choose) and include the purpose statement highlighting the importance of using acceptable and contemporary language related to disability through its presence at key conferences, workshops and other public events.

Planned Action: The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will continue to educate the public on the importance of using acceptable and contemporary language related to disability.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario continues to educate the public on the importance of using acceptable and contemporary language related to disabilities by incorporating appropriate language into all of its awareness and educational products such as: “May I Help You?”, Serve-ABILITY, About the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and “Talk To Me”.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will publish on a regular basis, articles that feature accessibility issues in the ministry’s internal quarterly newsletter *The Comet*. The ministry will promote its process to solicit and address ideas and suggestions from staff relating to accessibility.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to regularly publish articles to promote accessibility in its quarterly newsletter, *The Comet*.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: 25 articles featuring accessibility have appeared in five issues of *The Comet* from September 2007 to September 2008.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Financial Planning and Business Management Branch will revise the ministry’s procurement policies to address accessibility considerations.

Planned Action: Staff procurement training will include information on accessibility considerations. Training is planned for December 2008.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry’s draft procurement policy has been revised to include a section on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Within the section, a link has been provided to e-laws to access the Act.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will negotiate new leases and lease renewals in keeping with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and the barrier-free guidelines to prevent the creation of barriers to staff, clients or members of the public with disabilities.

Planned Action: For any new Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) office lease, the Capital and Accommodation Services Branch will work to ensure accessibility is provided to a minimum OBC standard through the Ontario Realty Corporation lease agreement. A number of new ODSP site searches are underway where accessibility must be ensured.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has entered new leases for space for the ODSP offices in Brockville and Ottawa. Lease renewals have included the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario at 777 Bay Street, 6th floor, which meets the accessibility requirements.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry, in partnership with the Ontario Realty Corporation, the Ministry of Government Services and the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure will continue to upgrade the elevators and washrooms in the 900 Bay Street, Toronto complex in keeping with the findings of the Ontario March of Dimes accessibility audits conducted in 2006-2007.

Planned Action: It is expected that the work on the washrooms will be completed by March 31, 2009. Completion of the work on the elevators will be completed by March 31, 2010.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The renovations to the washrooms in the 900 Bay Street complex are underway. Audible alerts, in both French and English, are in place in the elevators at the 900 Bay Street complex.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Capital and Accommodation Services Branch (CASB) will work with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to develop barrier-free guidelines for ministry use.

Planned Action: Once the Built Environment Working Group has completed its work, and when the new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) accessibility design guidelines are issued through the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), CASB will work with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to develop a set of consistent standards to be used across the various ministry program areas.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Capital and Accommodation Services Branch (CASB) will develop a strategic approach for the accessibility assessment of ministry sites pending the development of the ministry's barrier-free guidelines.

Planned Action: Upon the release of new *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* design guidelines, CASB will lead a review of all ministry occupied sites in order to determine the work required at each site to comply with building code and the new AODA design guidelines.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: Ongoing

The Information & Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will be modeled as a source of accessibility information as it relates to Information & Information Technology (I&IT) across the Ontario Public Service (OPS) enterprise. The Centre will develop expertise of existing and emerging technologies to support people with disabilities (e.g., Assistive Technology Devices).

Planned Action: The Information & Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence continues to provide advice and support to the OPS I&IT community on issues related to improving the accessibility of I&IT solutions.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The Information & Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence developed the *OPS Web Site Remediation Framework*, which includes methods, checklists and guidebooks for OPS intranet and internet sites.

The Information & Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence supported many enterprise accessibility initiatives such as the Accessibility Multi-Year Plan and Beyond eOntario I&IT Strategic Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: New

The ministry will provide information to staff on new technology, including exploring the option of using a read aloud function on computers.

Planned Action: The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will continue to work with staff to provide information on new technology that can be used to enhance their ability to perform their jobs.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: New

The ministry will establish a Staff Assistive Technology User group so that employees who use the same or similar assistive devices can communicate with other employees using the same assistive technology products.

Planned Action: The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will encourage staff who are currently using assistive devices to communicate with others who are using similar technology.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: New

The ministry will continue to implement improvements to the built environment and technology with a view to improving accessibility for staff and clients.

Planned Action: As improvements are required for new offices or work stations, the ministry will continue to ensure they are accessible and explore the options of using new technology to enhance the service required.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: New

The ministry will continue to address accessibility in all its owned and leased spaces.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to ensure that all new offices or new leases are accessible for all clients and staff. The ministry will also address concerns regarding the accessibility of a specific location as they occur.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: New

The ministry will develop a best practice guide on how to provide accessible information.

Planned Action: The ministry will develop a best practice guide on how to create information in accessible formats.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

For More Information

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

Please phone:

Cate Parker, Manager, Renewal Strategies Office

416-327-6101

cate.parker@ontario.ca

General inquiry number:

In Toronto call: 416-325-5666

Toll-free from across Ontario: 1-888-789-4199

TTY number: 1-800-387-5559

E-mail: mcssinfo@ontario.ca

Ministry website address:

www.mcass.gov.on.ca

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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