

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

*2009-2010
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of everyday life, including:

- Customer service
- Information
- Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

The Government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province, beginning in January 2010 when the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service come into force.

Since 2001, the government has been laying a strong foundation to improve accessibility through the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA). Every year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans that are required under the ODA.

Building on last year's plan, the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan will continue moving the Ministry of Community and Social Services towards the goal of accessibility for all Ontarians.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services' seventh annual accessibility plan highlights achievements in 2008-2009 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.

In 2008-2009, the ministry initiated a number of important changes designed to increase access to information about social assistance programs including the Ontario Disability Support Program. Some of these changes include:

- An eligibility estimator, which allows people to determine the likelihood of qualifying for assistance before beginning the application process.
- An online office locator which helps people find the closest office to their home.
- A one-year pilot for people living in Algoma and Toronto allows people to apply for Ontario Works benefits online and outside of regular business hours.

The ministry has continued to raise awareness about accessibility for its own staff, for staff working in other parts of the Ontario government and for the broader public sector.

As part of its mandate to raise awareness about accessibility, the ministry has embarked on a campaign designed to engage and educate private sector businesses regarding employment for individuals with disabilities. The ministry has developed numerous videos and success stories to showcase accessibility achievements across Ontario.

To complement these efforts, the ministry continues to educate all staff about how to provide good customer service to customers with disabilities. In 2008-2009, the ministry provided training to over 90 percent of its staff to enhance the service experience of both external and internal customers with disabilities. The ministry also hosted eight sessions benefiting over 150 staff. These sessions deepened staff understanding of accessibility issues. In addition, all ministry staff supporting the Ontario Disability Support Program must complete Access, Awareness and Accountability training.

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

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. **All OPS ministries must comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010.**

To demonstrate how OPS ministries are preparing to meet the regulation requirements, this section has been added to highlight customer service initiatives.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

The ministry will develop a new public awareness campaign based on AccessON. AccessON is a web 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 the accessibility standards.

Planned Actions: The ministry is developing the next phase of the AccessON campaign with a focus on helping businesses and organizations comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The ministry will inform businesses and organizations through direct outreach and keep the website up to date with tools, resources and information.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: An AccessON public awareness campaign was launched in 2008. Transit advertisements were launched in communities across the province 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. The transit campaign is now complete.

The ministry has developed a marketing plan to engage and educate private sector businesses through direct and targeted outreach.

The ministry has produced, posted and promoted approximately 13 videos and 22 success stories to showcase accessibility achievements across Ontario and to encourage others to do the same. AccessON has been promoted widely through events, conferences and other communications opportunities.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) 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 ADO is continuing to build upon the 2008-2009 presentations that were conducted jointly with the Diversity Office, Ministry of Government Services by continuing to inform and support leaders in the Ontario Public Service about the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 - Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ADO worked with the Ministry of Government Services' Diversity Office to deliver presentations to Ontario Public Service staff on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Presentations to Ontario Public Service leaders started in fall 2008 and were completed in spring 2009. Several meetings have taken place with other ministries to provide guidance and direction for supporting transfer payment agencies. Information and support will continue in response to issues and questions.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Complete

The ADO will launch a supplementary module to the "May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities." e-learning. The "May I Help You? - Supplementary: 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.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Oct 2009

Results Achieved: The "May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service" module was launched in Spring 2009. This e-learning module builds on the "May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" e-learning module and provides information to help staff meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation under the AODA.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Complete

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

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 09

Results Achieved: Over 1500 Service Ontario staff benefited from 15 sessions in four cities - London, Kingston, Thunder Bay and Toronto. In addition, the ADO conducted train-the-trainer sessions with senior trainers and managers from the Ontario Public service Facilitator's Network to lead some of the ServiceOntario sessions.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Complete

The ADO 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.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Jan 09

Results Achieved: The facilitator's guide to support staff training and development was published in January 2009.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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 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 are six sessions scheduled for 2009-2010 for new ODSP staff.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Seven sessions were held in 2008-2009 benefiting 135 ministry staff.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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

Planned Action: The Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence will explore ways to enhance TTY services offered by the Ontario government including using its intranet site to publish best practices, policies and other TTY resources to promote the OPS Quality Service Standards.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Initial findings were analyzed and the centre will continue developing a knowledge base of alternatives for enhancing existing TTY services, in the event that there is a requirement for an enterprise automated TTY service (e.g. software application to replace existing TTY systems).

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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

Planned Action: As changes to an existing or new site are required, the Capital and Accommodation Service Branch will work to assess all ministry sites to identify where accessibility improvements could enhance the accessibility of our offices.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has completed a number of projects that have enhanced customer service and accessibility for staff and clients with disabilities. The completed projects include the relocation of the ODSP offices in Brockville and Kirkland Lake. A new accessible counter in the Windsor ODSP office is being installed.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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

Planned Action: The ministry will develop a pilot proposal to offer video remote interpreting services to Ontario Disability Support Program clients living in the Northern, North East and Eastern regions.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The Community Services Branch conducted a preliminary review of the feasibility of developing a pilot for video remote interpreting services that would improve access to ministry programs for individuals who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

The ministry 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 ministry will continue to highlight best practices and publish success stories on AccessON.ca

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry developed “Talk to Me: Serving Customers with Disabilities” DVD. This DVD is designed to help businesses learn how to provide accessible customer service. The DVD is being distributed to businesses and organizations across Ontario. The DVD has been segmented into six videos and posted online at AccessON.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment:** On-going

The ministry will support further enhancements to the Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT) to support the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Planned Actions: The ministry will be adding features to SDMT to support the ability to send letters to clients in a secure manner over the internet. In addition, enhancements are being made to identify clients requiring accommodation, improve client letters, make it easier for people to apply for assistance, as well as to make daily direct bank deposit available to people receiving ODSP benefits.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Enhancements to the Service Delivery Flags in SDMT were implemented in November 2008. These flags help caseworkers easily identify client needs, such as the need for an interpreter or other accommodation.

In addition, SDMT generated letters have been improved and will be written in plain language. Plain language overpayment letters were implemented in November 2009.

Other changes include a pilot project of emailing SDMT generated letters to clients.

A one-year online application pilot began in November 2008. This pilot is a partnership between the ministry, Toronto Employment and Social Services and the Algoma District Social Services Administration Board. People living in these two municipalities are able to complete an application for Ontario Works over the internet. Caseworkers are able to upload the application directly into the SDMT. These changes improve peoples access to service by allowing people to apply for assistance outside of regular business hours.

The website includes valuable information regarding social assistance programs thereby reducing the need for office visits or telephone calls. In addition, two internet access features have been made available on the ministry's website:

- An eligibility estimator allows the public to determine their likelihood for qualifying for social assistance prior to proceeding with the application process.
- An office locator, which helps people find the appropriate Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works local office using their postal code.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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

Planned Action: To support the AODA and the ODSP Accommodations Policy, clients requesting information in alternate formats will be accommodated. The ministry is examining a system to track these requests.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Enhancements to the Service Delivery Model technology were implemented in November 2008 in order to help caseworkers more easily track client needs. The ministry is now able to track how many clients have specific service delivery requirements, including requests for alternate formats.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Complete

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

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Feb 09

Results Achieved: In February 2009, a majority of direct human resources services provided to ministry employees were transferred to the Regional Service Delivery Centres, Ministry of Government Services (MGS). The Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness, MGS, was established in April 2008 to promote the health, safety and well-being of OPS employees. Key activities for the Centre include: developing programs and services that promote the health, safety and wellness of Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees; assisting ministries with legislative compliance and implementing policies and best practices relating to health, safety and wellness in OPS workplaces; and fostering collaborative relationships between managers, staff and their representatives in securing the health, safety and wellness of employees at work. To support these initiatives, the Centre, through the OPS Wellness Intranet site, posts all OPS policies related to accessibility for employees. The ministry's Human Resources Strategic Business Unit liaises with other human resources partners to promote applicable accommodations policies and support their executive clientele in accessing services.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

Consistent with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the ministry will post detailed information about renovations to its offices that will cause a service disruption.

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

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: Consistent with the requirements contained in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the ministry is posting notices when its services are interrupted.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

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

Results Achieved: The ministry established a group of divisional staff to work on implementing the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to ensure all compliance requirements are met by January 1, 2010. This group provided valuable feedback on the development of a complaints and redress process.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-Going

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: All public documents will be in plain language and made available in accessible formats.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has produced a number of plain language documents including a guide to the new Developmental Services legislation “About the Services and Supports to Promote Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008”. This document is available in hard copy, electronic and audio versions.

The ministry has posted a range of ODSP forms on its internet site for easy access to these documents. Staff can quickly and easily access forms in a range of formats to better service clients.

In addition, the ministry has developed a business process for all ODSP staff to follow when providing documents to clients in alternate formats.

All documents posted on the ministry’s website are available in accessible HTML and PDF formats. MS Word documents will be available upon request.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: On-going

The ministry will encourage staff to take training designed to improve customer service.

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to encourage staff to take training that will help their understanding of how to provide accessible customer service. All staff are being asked to complete the following two courses: “May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities” and “May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service.”

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: As of October 2009, 89 percent of ministry staff had taken the “May I Help You?” e-learning module and 80 percent of ministry staff had taken the “May I Help You? Supplementary” e-learning module.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility improvement initiatives to identify, remove or prevent barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

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 need to comply with the four remaining accessibility standards for 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: On-going

The ministry will promote the Deputy Minister's confidential online suggestion box as a way 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 questions, concerns or observations related to accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – March 10

Results Achieved: To date, there have been 40 suggestions made to the online suggestion box. A majority of the suggestions focus on making the ministry's local offices accessible and the steps we can take to ensure all clients are able to access ministry services. All suggestions have been forwarded to the responsible division for consideration.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

The ministry's Foundations for Managers Program will include accessibility awareness training. The goal of the Foundations for Managers Program is to identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of ministry 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 AccessON material. There are two sessions of the program scheduled in 2009-2010.

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, 392 staff have benefited from this training.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

The ministry will promote the online training "Maximizing the Contributions of Employees and Applicants with Disabilities" for managers and supervisors.

Planned Action: The ministry 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 2009, the ministry has actively encouraged all ministry managers and supervisors to complete the online training. As of October 2009, 91 percent of ministry managers and supervisors had completed the training.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

The Employer Outreach Secretariat will promote the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Planned Action: The Employer Outreach Secretariat will focus on:

- Creating 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;
- Supporting recognition of employers that are progressive in hiring people with disabilities;
- Hosting a forum for employers to share best practices in hiring people with disabilities;
- Support the "Don't Waste Talent" Employer Awareness campaign which encourages employers to hire people with disabilities, specifically from the Ontario Disabilities Support Program Employment Supports service providers;
- Collaborate with the Job Opportunity Information Network to host a disability and employment conference in November 2009; and,
- Implement the Ontario Public Services Diversity Strategy with a focus on people with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Sep 07 – Mar 10**Results Achieved:** The ministry has:

- Developed the Employer Awareness Campaign which is in the final stages of content and website development, including soliciting feedback from internal and external stakeholders on the campaign's creative design and messaging.
- Provided continued financial support to the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters to deliver Business Takes Action (BTA), an employer-led capacity building initiative, which is developing tools and resources for use by business to establish an inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. The BTA also recognizes employers that champion employment of people with disabilities and/or the removal of barriers to accessibility.
- Held the second annual Symposium on Disability and Employment in November 2008, and built on the foundation laid by the first symposium by featuring best employer practices in hiring people with disabilities, and recognized leaders in this area.
- Drafted and internally promoted a Human Resources Handbook.

Focus Area: Employment**Commitment:** On-going

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

Planned Action: The Employer Outreach Secretariat is updating the Manager's Toolkit for Scouting and Hiring People with Disabilities to reflect the government's centralized talent recruitment practices.

The updates version will be a guidebook consisting of two modules focusing on:

- For recruiters – targeted outreach to job seekers with disabilities
- For managers – bias-free interviewing with people who have disabilities

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: On-going

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. The pilot of the tool to read website contents aloud will be evaluated and the findings will be reported to Information and Information Technology senior management in early 2010.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: A pilot of a tool that will read contents out loud was implemented on the ministry's website.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

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: A cross-ministry staff Assistive Technology User Group was established in January 2009. The Information and Information Technology Centre of Excellence continues to encourage employees to participate, while providing administrative support and acting as a moderator for the group.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry launched the Ontario Public Service Assistive Technology Group in January 2009. As of October 2009, there were 22 participants.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

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: The ministry will continue to require all staff to take both May I Help You? e-learning modules. The ministry will include information about these e-learning modules in the orientation materials that are being developed.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: As of October 2009, 89 percent of staff have completed the “May I Help You?” customer service training for people with disabilities. 80 percent of ministry staff have completed the “May I Help You? Supplementary” e-learning module.

The ministry also hosted eight group sessions intended to provide a deeper understanding of accessibility issues. These sessions benefited over 150 ministry staff.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: On-going

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) will continue to be an Executive Sponsor of D-Net.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has a representative on D-Net who acts as a chair of the network group as well as a member of the Diversity Council Executive which promotes the interest of people with disabilities working in the Ontario Public Service. The ministry’s CAO is an Executive Sponsor of D-Net.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Complete

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 – Jan 2009

Results Achieved: The procurement curriculum was modified to increase awareness of accessibility considerations in procurement. Two training sessions on the new curriculum were held in December 2008 and January 2009.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Complete

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

Results Achieved: All ODSP staff and managers have completed the PACE training.

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.

The ministry is preparing for the implementation of a new service delivery and staffing model for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) under the framework of the modernization project. To support the transition to the new staffing structure, the ministry will provide core training to all ODSP staff over the course of the next two years. Our goal is to ensure that everyone will receive the training they need to perform the new job functions.

Part of the development of this core training curriculum will be the incorporation of the Professional Advancement and Career Education (PACE) training modules into the overall training strategy for the Modernization project. As such, future PACE sessions will be deferred until such time as the overall Modernization training strategy is implemented.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 09

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: On-going

The ministry will include articles that feature accessibility in its 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 feature articles that promote accessibility in its quarterly newsletter, *The Comet*.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: 18 accessibility related articles have appeared in five issues of *The Comet* in 2008-2009.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Complete

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.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – May 09

Results Achieved: In 2009, responsibility for Accessibility Expos was assumed by the Diversity Office, Ministry of Government Services. The ministry was an active participant and exhibitor at the Accessibility Expo held in Toronto in spring 2009.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: On-going

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

Results Achieved: All documents posted on the ministry's website are available in accessible formats. In addition, the website has text only capability.

Documents in alternate formats are provided upon request.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: On-going

The ministry is introducing an email 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.

Phase two will be based on the results of phase one. It is expected that 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

Results Achieved: The Alternate Communication Initiative is the first phase of a three part implementation strategy that will provide email documentation to clients who request it. Once the pilot phase is complete, the technology will be evaluated for province-wide implementation.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Completed

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

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Oct 09

Results Achieved: The ministry's draft procurement policy has been revised to include a section on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The new procurement policies have been posted for all ministry staff to access.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: On-going

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will promote the availability of "[Talk About Disabilities – Choose the Right Word](#)" lexicon 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 lexicon is included in many public education and outreach materials. "Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service" e-learning course includes a link to the lexicon. It was updated in April 2009.

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: Built Environment

Commitment: On-going

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 monitor that accessibility is addressed to a minimum OBC standard through the Ontario Realty Corporation lease agreement. A number of new ODSP site searches are underway.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry has entered new leases for space for the ODSP offices in Brockville, Ottawa, Renfrew, Mississauga and Brampton. 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: On-going

The ministry, in partnership with the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), 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: Accessibility improvements to the elevators in the 900 Bay Street, Toronto complex are underway. Further accessibility improvements will be based on the results of accessibility audits of 50 buildings across Ontario. These audits are being conducted by the ORC.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The accessibility improvement to the Hepburn Block elevators will be completed in December 2009. The renovations to the washrooms in the 900 Bay Street complex are complete. Audible alerts, in both French and English, are in place in the elevators at the 900 Bay Street complex.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: On-going

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: CASB will review the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and will further review design guidelines as they are made available through the Ontario Realty Corporation to inform the development of appropriate guidelines for ministry offices.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The initial draft has been provided for review.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: On-going

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: With the release of the new *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* built environment standards, CASB will work to assess all ministry sites, in conjunction with other corporate priorities to assess all ministry sites to identify where accessibility improvements are required to meet guidelines.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: In anticipation of the approved *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* built environment standards, the Capital and Accommodation Services Branch has reviewed a number of locations providing services to people receiving benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: On-going

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: With the release of the new *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* built environment standards by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), the Capital and Accommodation Services Branch will continue to improve access to ministry sites for staff and clients.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Mar 10

Results Achieved: The ministry worked with ORC *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* Pilot Accessibility Design Standard in considering improvements to its sites.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: On-going

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

Planned Action: The ministry will continue to monitor 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

Results Achieved: The ministry has moved a number of Ontario Disability Support Program offices to improve accessibility for staff and clients. These offices include Renfrew, Mississauga and Brampton.

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: On-going

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 products).

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.

In addition, 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.

For More Information

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

Please phone:

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E-mail: mcssinfo@ontario.ca

Ministry website address:

www.mcss.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address:

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

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