



Ministry of Community and Social Services

2013 - 14 – Annual Accessibility Plan

Table of Contents

Section One: Report on Measures Taken in 2012 - 13	3
Section Two: Report on Measures Planned for 2013 - 14	10
Section Three: Report on Legislative Review	16
Glossary of Terms and/or Acronyms.....	17
How to Contact us	19

Introduction

For over ten years, every ministry has set a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Ministries achieve this through the preparation of their annual Accessibility Plan (Plan) as required under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 \(ODA\)](#).

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) established Ontario's roadmap to become accessible by 2025. It includes standards in areas such as: customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment. In 2010 the Ministry of Community and Social Services complied with the requirements of the first standard on [customer service](#). In 2011, ministries began to meet the requirements of the other four standards found in the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#).

On January 1, 2012, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) published a single [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(MYAP\)](#). The MYAP included the following commitment:

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities.

Section One of the MCSS Accessibility Plan provides detailed information on the measures taken for the commitments made in 2012-13. Section Two of the MCSS Accessibility Plan outlines a number of commitments for 2014 and beyond that will contribute to a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.

To access this and other ministries' 2013 – 14 Accessibility Plans, visit [Ontario.ca](#).

Section One: Report on Measures Taken in 2012 – 13

The following is a list of the commitments made in last year's Plan and the measures taken.

** Note: In 2013, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) was transferred to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. All commitments led by the ADO will be reported under the MEDTE 2013-14 Accessibility Plan.

2012-13 Customer Services Commitments

- Continue to make Ontario's developmental services system fair and easier to access through the implementation of the supports and services to promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008.
- Develop a list of Ministry staff with American Sign Language (ASL) training and engage them in developing ASL training for other staff.
- "May I Help You?" training in group sessions for Ministry staff.
- Include in all branch level emergency management plans an updated "accessibility impact statement" that outlines the Ministry's commitment to deliver services to people with disabilities as they relate to:
 - o non-emergency events where people with disabilities may be affected as a result of a disruption to normal business processes; and,
 - o emergency events where an alternative service delivery location is utilized to ensure the continuity of business services.
- Introduce a self-service portal to provide ongoing online services and information for social assistance clients, reducing barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Exceed the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard by requiring all staff to complete the CFL's two online training modules on providing accessible customer service, "May I Help You."
- Require all managers to complete the ODA Maximizing the Contributions of Employees with Disabilities online training.

Measures Taken

- An ASL committee was formed in June 2013 and developed an awareness training session that was piloted in Toronto in October 2013. The first phase of this training will be evaluated to explore staff interest in more advanced training and to determine training needs for remote area offices.

- In August 2013, group sessions on "May I Help You?" (MIHY) e- learning courses were offered to staff providing an opportunity to raise questions and discuss content.
- All branch level Emergency Plans (i.e. Continuity of Operations Plans) approved in 2012-13 included a "Commitment to Accessibility" statement. In addition, all plans have a form/checklist that aids in assessing and raising awareness of the accessibility of any planned alternative service delivery location.
- The Client Portal for the new social assistance technology has been tested by the Children, Youth and Social Services Information and Information Technology (CYSS I&IT) Accessibility Centre of Excellence (ACOE) to ensure that it is compliant with WCAG 2.0. The Social Services Solutions Modernization Project (SSSMP) has worked to ensure that the content on the client portal is written in plain language. The tool has also undergone various levels of testing to ensure ease of use prior to its launch in 2014.
- Staff completion of the "May I Help You?" (MIHY) parts 1 and 2 e-learning modules are monitored quarterly. As of July 2013, the MCSS staff completion rate for the MIHY 1: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities was 94% and MIHY 2: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service was 93%.
- All MCSS staff are required to complete IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) training. The Ministry completion rate for IASR in the OPS is 71% and Working Together - OHRC and AODA video is 72%.

2012-13 Information and Communications Commitments

- Feature accessibility during Emergency Preparedness Week.
- Highlight Windows 7 accessibility features to staff as computers are refreshed.
- Enrich staff awareness by promoting the use of Telephone Typewriter (TTY) and provide training on the use of TTY.
- Develop a style guide for staff on how to make internal e-mails accessible
- Explore secure e-mail as another means to communicate with clients.
- Offer a clear writing e-learning module to staff.
- Explore opportunities to expand the Assistive Technology User Group to benefit more staff.

Measures Taken

- Accessibility awareness was a component of Emergency Preparedness Week 2013. To highlight emergency preparedness, Ministry staff visited York Seniors Centre and Yonge Street Mission Seniors Centre to hold sessions designed to prepare seniors for an emergency evacuation.
- Windows 7 features were promoted to staff through MyOPS. Features were also promoted in the accessibility section of the main MCSS intranet site.
- The CFL video - Mission Possible #4 – It's Your Call: Using a TTY and the Bell Relay System to communicate with someone who is Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing was promoted to staff through the MCSS Diversity and Inclusion intranet site.
- The I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence (ACOE) provides leadership in the identification and removal of barriers for people with disabilities within the OPS by providing advice, direction and resources related to accessible I&IT solutions. To enhance staff awareness, the ACOE published a TTY Interactive Voice Response (IVR) accessibility checklist on their intranet site. This checklist promotes TTY awareness and accessibility considerations in IVR systems.
- Tips on making emails accessible were promoted through the Comet, the Ministry's internal newsletter, in late 2012 and maintained in the accessibility section of the main intranet site.
- As a result of a successful secure e-mail pilot, the Ministry will begin rolling out a solution that will allow ODSP staff to communicate securely by e-mail with clients in November 2013. Secure e-mail will be phased into other business areas within the Ministry over the next 18 months.
- The I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence continues to promote and encourage sharing of best practices and guidance within the Assistive Technology User Group. The Centre sends out informational e-mails on a bi-weekly basis and has expanded to 47 members.

2102-13 Employment Commitments

- Make available a WebEx training session on barrier-free recruitment practices.
- Continue to examine broader use of the OPS Inclusion Lens to eliminate barriers in recruitment practices.
- Ensure ministry managers with employees with disabilities have documented accommodation plans in place, as required.

- Provide a demo/experiential learning area for staff to learn about assistive technologies and devices.
- Form a Manager's Community of Practice to provide managers with the opportunity to discuss issues or ask questions regarding employment accommodation.
- Provide information regarding employment accommodation and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to staff during orientation.
- Develop, pilot and evaluate training on the Manager's Toolkit – providing accommodations to Ministry employees with disabilities.
- Develop disability awareness sessions for Ministry senior managers with a focus on experiential learning led by a group of facilitators with disabilities.

Measures Taken

- A training session on barrier-free recruitment practices was made available on the MCSS Diversity and Inclusion intranet site.
- The Ministry has consulted with human resources centres of expertise within the Ministry of Government Services to explore the use of the OPS Inclusion lens in current recruitment practices.
- Ministry managers who have employees with disabilities have documented accommodation plans in place, as required.
- The MCSS Manager's Toolkit: Providing Accommodations to Ministry Employees with Disabilities is a resource that was developed to assist in the development and documentation of employee accommodation plans. Training on the Manager's Toolkit was developed, offered and evaluated in June 2013.
- The I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence published numerous resources about assistive technologies on their intranet site, including a screen reader demonstration video, assistive technology user guides, and descriptions of devices used by people with disabilities. The Centre also invited clients to visit their lab to experience the assistive technologies.
- A Managers Community of Practice was formed in February 2013. Teleconferences were held on a quarterly basis featuring topics such as Return to Work/Employment Accommodation Policies, Accommodating Employees Facing Mental Health Challenges, and Environmental Sensitivities. An average of 80 managers participated in each teleconference.
- Information on the EAP (i.e. posters, pamphlets business cards, etc.) and the link to the MCSS Diversity and Inclusion intranet site (which includes employment

accommodation resources) was provided during orientation sessions for approximately 150 staff.

- In March 2013, Ministry senior managers and staff took part in a hands-on disability awareness session facilitated by Variety Village, a non-profit organization. Staff from Variety Village facilitated a variety of experiential activities to educate participants on the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

2012-13 Built Environment Commitments

- Renegotiate new leases and lease renewals in compliance with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and the barrier-free guidelines to prevent barriers for staff, clients or members of the public with disabilities.
- Continue to assess and make plans to improve the accessibility of ministry offices, facilities and technology to improve accessibility for staff and clients.
- Promote/refresh “Planning Accessible Meeting Guidelines” to include new policies and information on external meetings.

Measures Taken

- Accessibility continues to be a key requirement when searching for new leases and renegotiating leases. All designs were prepared in accordance with the Infrastructure Ontario (IO) Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. In 2012-13, MCSS negotiated one new lease and renewed five ensuring that all new accessibility requirements were met.
- The Planning Accessible Meeting Guidelines has been deferred until the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards and updated barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code are available.

2012-13 Procurement Commitments

- Add a subsection on accessibility to the Ministry’s Electronic Manual of Ministry Administration (EMMA) in the Procurement section. The subsection will link to Supply Chain Management Division resources on Accessibility.
- Prepare and post an information package to support managers who need to make acquisitions of assistive technologies to accommodate staff with disabilities.
- Highlight accessibility information under the procurement section of the intranet site.

Measures Taken

- A subsection on Accessibility has been added to the Procurement section of EMMA. It links to seven documents that provide detailed direction, including language that can be used in Requests for Proposals and other procurement documents. It also links to the I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence which has trained staff to provide advice on accessibility issues and technology.
- The I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence provides advice and guidance to staff and managers on the types of assistive technologies available to accommodate staff with disabilities as well as the vendors from which the resources can be procured. Information on various assistive technologies can also be found on the Cluster's intranet site.

2102-13 Other Commitments

- Promote and encourage staff to complete the range of diversity and inclusion training offerings provided through the Centre for Leadership and Learning.
- Continue to use, and encourage staff to use, the OPS Inclusion Lens to review acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services.
- Senior managers will encourage all staff to include the use of the Lens in their annual Performance Development and Learning Plans.

Measures Taken

- A list of recommended CFLL courses related to diversity, inclusion and accessibility was developed and promoted to Ministry staff through the MCSS Diversity and Inclusion intranet site.
- All divisions reported on using the Inclusion Lens in at least one of their programs, policies, practices or services.
- The Lens was used to help inform the approach to engaging with First Nations delivery partners in conversations about identifying and addressing barriers to accessing ODSP in their communities.
- MCSS also used the Lens to review the following legislation:
 - o Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996; and
 - o Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;
- The inclusion based performance commitment to encourage the widespread use of the OPS Inclusion Lens was communicated and promoted to senior managers.

Recommended actions to achieve this commitment require that senior managers discuss and encourage staff to participate in the OPS Inclusion Lens course and identify opportunities to use the OPS Inclusion Lens in the office/unit programs, policies and services.

Section Two: Report on Measures Planned for 2013 - 14

Last year, the OPS published a [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(MYAP\)](#) that outlines how the government will identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. This section contains highlights of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan deliverables and Ministry proposed measures until 2016.

Customer Service

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

2013-14 Deliverables

- New staff are trained on accessibility.
- Accessibility criteria are built into decision-making, project management, procurement, technology, infrastructure, I & IT and training.
- Increased awareness in OPS of accessibility best practices in **customer service** and in the workplace.

2013-14 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Exceed the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by requiring all staff to complete the CFLL's two online training modules on providing accessible customer service.
- Promote and encourage staff to complete the range of diversity and inclusion training programs provided through the CFLL.
- Implement the Ministry multi-year diversity and inclusion plan. Key highlights include surveying staff for ideas to inform programming and developing educational supports for staff.
- Develop training offerings in sign language to support Ministry staff in providing an active offer of communication supports to people who communicate in sign language
- Develop and host advanced accessibility training for staff.
- Encourage the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens when developing/renewing service agreements.

2014-16 Deliverables

- Staff and customer feedback sought on accessibility innovations and improvements.
- Inclusion Lens applied to all policies and practices.
- Accessibility is part of all OPS business.

2014-2016 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Implement the Ministry's multi-year diversity and inclusion and accessibility plans. Key initiatives include incorporating inclusion commitments into manager Performance Development Plans.
- Launch the self-service portal to provide online services and information for social assistance clients, reducing barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Continue to exceed the requirement of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to train front-line staff by requiring all staff to complete the CFLL's two online training modules on providing accessible customer service, "May I Help You."
- Promote and encourage staff to complete a range of accessibility related training programs provided through the CFLL.
- Continue to encourage the use of the Inclusion Lens for new policies, programs, practices and services

Information and Communications

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats to all OPS staff and customers.

2013-14 Deliverables

- Accessibility criteria are built into decision-making, project management, procurement, technology, infrastructure, I & IT and training.
- Hold an Accessibility Expo

2013-14 Ministry Proposed Measures

- MCSS will roll out secure email to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) staff to communicate with clients. Secure email will be phased in to other business areas in the ministry as needed.
- Convert all new English and French PDFs to text-only versions for posting on the Ministry's public website.
- Continue to review all web sites to ensure that Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA are met.
- Ensure that all branch level emergency management plans outline the requirement to make emergency plan information available in an accessible format upon request, as soon as practicable.

2014-16 Deliverables

- Communications, websites, technology solutions and documents employ accessibility best practices.
- Accessibility Expo continues annually.

2014-16 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Continue to leverage the accessibility testing services of websites and documents offered by the I&IT Cluster Accessibility Centre of Excellence.
- Exceed the IASR training expectation by requiring all ministry staff to complete the CFLL e-learning courses: IASR in the OPS and the Working Together – The OHRC and ODA within three months of their start date.
- Continue to phase in secure email to allow ODSP staff to communicate with clients.
- Ministry delegates to attend Expo/JOIN conferences to learn about leading practices, strategies and supports for full inclusion on disability in the workplace.

Employment Accommodations

People with disabilities who are OPS employees participate fully and meaningfully in services and employment.

2013-14 Deliverables

- Conduct management review of accommodation for employees with disabilities.
- Increase awareness in OPS of accessibility best practices in customer service and in the workplace.
- Senior managers have accessibility performance commitments.

2013-14 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Evaluate the disability awareness sessions and implement sessions at a staff level.
- Develop educational sessions for staff on the AODA regulations.
- Launch training for managers to increase knowledge on providing accommodation for employees with disabilities.
- Continue to hold quarterly Manager Community of Practice teleconferences highlighting various subjects related to employment accommodation.

2014-16 Deliverables

- Implement best practices on employment accommodation and return to work.
- Improve accommodation for employees with disabilities as a result of findings from management review.
- Managers and staff have accessibility performance commitments.

2014-16 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Use the results from the 2014 Employee Survey to assess potential barriers for employees with disabilities and establish a plan to remove the barriers.
- The Ministry Emergency Management plan exercise will incorporate an element of accessibility.

Built Environment

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

2013-14 Deliverables

- Continue to develop strategies for addressing infrastructure barriers.

2013 -14 Ministry Proposed Measures

- The Ministry will continue to address accessibility in all its owned and leased spaces.
- Promote/refresh “Planning Accessible Meeting Guidelines” to include new policies and information on external meetings to reflect the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards and updated barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code

2014-16 Deliverables

- OPS ready to implement requirements of IASR standards on Public Spaces.

2014 - 16 Ministry Proposed Measures

- The Ministry will continue to address accessibility in all of its owned and leased spaces.

Other Outcomes and Leadership

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario.

2013-14 Deliverables

- Ongoing consultations with persons with disabilities.
- Ministries continue to publish annual accessibility plans.
- Accessibility continues as a strong organizational commitment.

2013 - 14 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Encourage all staff to use the OPS Inclusion Lens to review acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services.
- The Ministry will continue to play an active role on the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) which was established to prepare for the integrated accessibility standards, under the AODA by providing a consumer perspective on implementation. The Council also helps to further develop leadership capacity of employees with

disabilities in the OPS, with a broader goal of supporting the journey towards a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.

2014 - 16 Deliverables

- Accessibility continues as strong organizational commitment

2014 - 16 Ministry Proposed Measures

- Continue to exceed the IASR training expectations to train front-line staff by requiring all new staff to complete the CFLL e-learning courses: IASR in the OPS and the Working Together – The OHRC and ODA within three months of their start date

Section Three: Report on Legislative Review

In support of our commitment to improve access for people with disabilities, the Ministry of Community and Social Services will continue to review government legislation and policies, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Recognizing the importance of addressing accessibility barriers in laws that have a high impact on members of the public and persons with disabilities, the government is following a three-pronged strategy that will prioritize the review of high impact legislation including:

- 1 Development of a standardized process and tools for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers;
- 2 By the end of 2014, review of 52 targeted high-impact statutes that meet the following criteria:
 - a. affect persons with disabilities directly;
 - b. provide for the delivery of widely applicable services or programs;
 - c. provide benefits or protections; or
 - d. affect a democratic or civic right or duty; and
- 3 Review procedural rules, policies and guidelines for select high-impact legislation, where necessary.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2012 - 13

In consultation with our Ministry's legal counsel and policy experts the ministry has used the Accessibility Legislative Review Tool to review the following statutes:

- Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996; and
- Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997.

Acts, Regulations and Policies to Be Reviewed in 2013 - 14

In consultation with our Ministry's legal counsel and policy experts the ministry has/will use the Accessibility Legislative Review Tool to review the following statutes:

- Ontario Works Act, 1997; and
- Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008.

Glossary of Terms and/or Acronyms

ADO – Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

ASCS - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation

ASL – American Sign Language

CFLL – Centre for Leadership and Learning

CYSSC – Children, Youth and Social Services Information and Information Technology Cluster

EAP – Employee Assistance Program

EMMA - Electronic Manual of Ministry Administration

EMU – Emergency Management Unit

HR SBU – Human Resources Strategic Business Unit

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

I&IT ACOE - Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence

IO – Infrastructure Ontario

IVR – Interactive Voice Response. IVR is a telephony technology in which someone uses a touch-tone telephone to interact with a database to acquire information from or enter data into the database. IVR technology does not require human interaction over the telephone as the user's interaction with the database is predetermined by what the IVR system will allow the user access to do. For example, banks and credit card companies use IVR systems so that their customers can receive up-to-date account information instantly and easily without having to speak directly to a person. IVR technology is also used to gather information, as in the case of telephone surveys in which the user is prompted to answer questions by pushing the numbers on a touch-tone telephone.

MCoP – Manager's Community of Practice

MCSS - Ministry of Community and Social Services

MEDTE/MRI - Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment/Ministry of Research and Innovation

MIHY – “May I Help You?”

MOI – Ministry of Infrastructure

MYAP – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

SIPDDA – Social Inclusion for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008

SSSMP – Social Services Solutions Modernization Project

OBC – Ontario Building Code

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

OPS – Ontario Public Service

PDF – Portable Document Format

RSO – Renewal Strategies Office

TTY – Telephone Typewriter or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf

WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

How to Contact us

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Community and Social Services' Plan are always welcome.

General inquiry number: 416-325-5666 or 1-888-789-4199

Toll free TTY number: 1-800-387-5559

E-mail: mcssinfo.css@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: <http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/index.aspx>

Visit the [Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment's](#) website. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

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

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

TTY: 1-800-268-7095

© 2013 Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN 1708-3222

Ce document est disponible en français.