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Ministry of Economic Development and Trade 2005-2006 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

The recent passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 marks a new era of accessibility in Ontario. This legislation will make Ontario one of the world leaders in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

While the government is moving

forward to implement the new legislation, there will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.



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

This document is the third annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. It highlights achievements of the 2004-05 plan and outlines commitments for 2005-06 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing

initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.



Message from the Minister



It is my pleasure to support the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

Act, 2005.

This legislation will truly make Ontario a leader in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

At MEDT, we continue to build on past progress and accomplishments, and are now laying the foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will ensure real and effective change takes place.

In 2004-05, this ministry demonstrated continued leadership in improving accessibility by designing fully accessible Human Resources and

Facilities Branch and Communications and Public Affairs Branch reception areas. In addition, MEDT has employed a Human Resources and Facilities Branch receptionist trained in all aspects of accessibility under the ODA Act, 2001.



We will continue to lead by example, building on our successes and achievements, to become a fully accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

Working together we will create a living, working and business environment free from barriers and open to all.

The Honourable Joseph Cordiano
Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Report on Achievements of 2004-2005 Planning Commitments

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing, planned commitments outlined in its 2004-05 accessibility plan. The following section provides a status report.

Since the establishment of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's (MEDT) Accessibility Planning Group (APG) in early

2003, members have met to discuss ongoing strategies and opportunities for the ministry's accessibility plan.



In a deliberate effort to prevent barriers to employment with the ministry, the ministry's Human Resources and Facilities Services Branch has maintained full reception services in the branch's reception area. We have ensured that this first point of customer contact and service to the public and our employees is readily accessible to all.

The ministry has made significant progress in improving access:

An operational TTY telephone (telephone for persons with hearing disabilities) is maintained in the Human Resources and Facilities Services Branch on the third floor, and in the Communications Branch on the eighth floor. In addition, applicants can now e-mail or fax their applications directly to the Human Resources and Facilities Branch where they are placed in the appropriate competition file.

Employees with disabilities can obtain direct assistance from the Human Resources and Facilities Branch reception area to obtain benefits forms or counselling. The branch semi-annually reviews recruitment and employment practices to identify and eliminate barriers.



All management employees have undertaken training.

All MEDT staff attended "Performance Management and Learning and Development (PMLD)" training. While not a specific chapter in the training, all participants were made aware of the need to be sensitive to the PMLD process as it pertains to employees with disabilities.

A number of workplace accessibility improvements have been installed, including: lever-style door handles; telephones located at wheelchair height in the lobbies; and a new electronic barrier-free access system on all floors without receptionists.

Over 80 per cent of ministry telephones have been upgraded to have a hands-free feature and the remaining will be replaced by the end of this year. One hundred per cent of the ministry's field offices have been made wheelchair accessible.



Our practice of issuing cell-phones with 2-way radio capabilities to the Chief Fire Warden, OPP Staff Sergeant and, any persons requiring emergency evacuation assistance, is now an OPS "Best Practice". Employees with disabilities have these with them

at all times. Another OPS "Best Practice" is the issuance of a wallet sized "fan-out" card describing emergency procedures to all staff. This has proved to be beneficial to employees with disabilities because of its concise information on evacuation procedures.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure employees and applicants receive accommodations as required. All employees have access to personal ergonomic assessments and all office furnishings are purchased or modified to comply with ergonomic assessment criteria and customized to employees' specific requirements. The ministry's orientation handbook details these and other key accessibility considerations for staff and client safety.



MEDT publications are available in accessible formats from Publications Ontario. One of the ministry's most popular publications, "Starting a Small Business in Ontario", has been available on the ministry's website in an accessible format for the past several years.

The ministry's websites were rebuilt or retrofitted to update these sites to ensure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities. The ministry's main website with key information is accessible to those who visit it.

The ministry has rebuilt its intranet "Staff Net", to ensure that it is fully accessible.

In its 2005-06 Business Plan the Ministry has committed, "to ensure that ministry programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities, including websites and publications as required."



The following is a list of achievements leading into the 2005-06 Plan:

Commitment: MEDT will continue to apply Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October, 2004, when assessing and renovating all of its premises.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: OBC standards are applied as they are released and become available.

Commitment: MEDT will continue to improve barrier-free signage throughout the ministry.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: The Ministry applies "state of the art" building signage techniques and technology as it becomes available, and will continue to do so.



Commitment: MEDT will continue to review reception counter

heights to ensure barrier-free services to disabled clients and members of the public.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: Minister's office, Deputy Minister's office, Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception counters now comply with ODA access requirements.

Commitment: Complete main HR and Front Lobby reception areas to ensure they are fully accessible under ODA accessibility requirements.

Status: Plans completed and awaiting funding approvals.

Action and Timeframe: Planned implementation in 2005-06.

Rationale: Part of MEDT facilities priority on accessibility of premises.



Commitment: Provide managers with MBS procurement guidelines, containing accessibility considerations.

Status: Complete, and in progress.

Action and Timeframe:

Procurement guidelines published on ministry website, where they are available to all employees.

Rationale: MEDT will give priority consideration to vendors sensitive to accessibility for the disabled.

Commitment: Continue to ensure MEDT websites are fully accessible.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: MEDT

ensured that all current websites were fully accessible.

Commitment: Review all new websites to ensure accessibility in compliance with ODA, 2001.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe:

Accessibility standards do apply to the creation and publication of all MEDT websites.



Commitment: MEDT will work with Publications Ontario in providing ministry publications in alternate formats when requested by ministry clients and the general public. This is a key requirement under ODA, 2001.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: Active.
All requests met to date.

Commitment:

1. MEDT will continue its best practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. Our service provider is sensitive to the ergonomic needs of disabled employees.
2. MEDT Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception is staffed by permanent individuals trained to serve clients, staff and members of the public with disabilities. MEDT is committed to

provision of this full service through its Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception.

3. MEDT will continue to encourage managers to review their programs, services and policies to ensure barrier removal and to allow consideration of persons with mental and emotional disabilities and to obtain outside mental health expertise as required for these individuals.
4. MEDT will expand its promotion of its comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for employees with potential/existing emotional/mental disabilities.



Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: 1. In 2004-05, 108 employees received a full ergonomic assessment of their workplace and remedial actions carried out. This service is available to all employees on an as needed basis. MEDT is proud of this best practice especially its availability to all employees.

Commitment: Complete the training and hiring of a full-time receptionist in the Human Resources and Facilities Branch reception area. MEDT established

as a best practice having a fully accessible Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception area including a receptionist trained in all aspects of accessibility under the ODA, 2001.

Status: Completed.

Action and Timeframe: 2.

Receptionist is now hired and trained in all ODA accessibility requirements and trains Ontario Works volunteers when they perform reception duties.

Commitment: MEDT had committed to review key HR policies for compliance to ODA especially to ensure barrier identification and elimination. This will now be carried out under an OPS-wide HR policy review led by the Ministry of Government Services Human Resource Service Delivery Division.

Status: Defer. Will re-generate as a priority in 2006-07.

Action and Timeframe: 3. MEDT will review core HR programs in conjunction with Ministry of Government Services Human Resource Service Delivery Division (2006-07), and will ensure accessibility and barrier elimination in the development of new HR programs.



Commitment: Expand as part of our review of programs, services and policies, MEDT's promotion and communication of its comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Promotion of employee health;
prevention of conditions leading to
emotional/mental disabilities.

Status: Complete and in progress.

Action and Timeframe: 4. EAP
training sessions were conducted
for all managers in the winter of
2004. Regular bulletins are issued
on EAP to ensure managers are
sensitive to employees with
potential existing emotional/mental
health disabilities.

Commitment: To conduct a staff
survey to solicit ideas on barrier
prevention.

Status: Defer to fall 2005.

Action and Timeframe: Will be
carried out once MEDT re-
alignment, organizational
restructuring is completed in Fall
of 2005.

Commitment: While conducting
multiple business meetings MEDT
will ensure it is serving the needs
of clients and members of the
public under ODA, 2001
requirements.

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: All
appropriate measures such as
signing, wheelchair access,
occupational therapist, and
ergonomic assessments are
provided to minimize barriers and
enhance accessibility.



Commitment: Continue to review
all business and operating policies
related to ODA, 2001,
requirements.

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe: All business and operating policies continue to be reviewed.

Commitment: Continue to review the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology Act. (M.I.T.T.)

Status: Complete.

Action and Timeframe: Act is reviewed with every program and policy change to ensure appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities. MEDT is committed to having its "founding" legislation compliant with provisions of the ODA, 2001.



Commitments and Strategies for 2005-2006

This section represents the ministry's plan, including new commitments and initiatives for the coming year.

Customer Service

Commitment: MEDT will continue the practice of providing line managers with MGS procurement guidelines, which contain accessibility considerations.

Action: Provide guidelines to line managers. **Timeframe:** Ongoing in 2005-06

Commitment: MEDT's Manager Procurement Training program will include specific elements of the ODA to further sensitize and commit managers to barrier-free accessibility in all procurement

activities.

Action: Include specific elements of the ODA within the Manager Procurement Training Program.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.

Commitment: MEDT will continue to ensure all of its websites are fully accessible.

Action: Work with webmaster to ensure websites are fully accessible.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Commitment: MEDT will continue its practice of analyzing all new websites/pages to ensure accessibility in compliance with the ODA, 2001.

Action: Review with webmaster.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.

Commitment: MEDT will review its Ministry Accessibility Planning Team membership to ensure the appropriate representatives from line and corporate resources are fully sensitive to the act and its requirements for clients, public and employers.

Action: Current Planning Team will meet later this year to review membership.

Timeframe: Before the end of the current year (2005).

Commitment: MEDT will continue its practice of reviewing business and operating policies to ensure they are barrier-free.

Action: Ongoing review.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Commitment: MEDT's best practice will continue, where, in meetings with clients offsite, we will ensure venues are fully accessible and offer barrier-free features such as wheelchair access, American Sign Language, ergonomics, occupational therapists, etc.

Action: Venues are deemed accessible and offer barrier-free features.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06

Employment

Commitment: MEDT will continue its OPS best practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. Our service provider is sensitive to the ergonomic needs of employees with disabilities.

Action: Assessments are ongoing.

Timeframe: Ongoing to 2006.

Commitment: MEDT Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception is staffed by a permanent individual trained to serve clients, staff and members of the public with disabilities. MEDT is committed to provision of this full service through its Human Resources and Facilities Branch and Communications Branch reception.

Action: Trained reception staff available.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Commitment: MEDT will continue to encourage managers to review their programs, services, and policies to ensure barrier removal and to allow consideration of persons with mental and emotional disabilities and to obtain outside mental health expertise as required for these individuals.

Action: Review of line programs, services and policies to be expanded.

Timeframe: March 2006.

Commitment: MEDT will expand its promotion of its comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for employees with potential/existing emotional/mental disabilities.

Action: Promote and further communicate the availability of the EAP program.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.

Communications and Information

Commitment: MEDT will continue its practice of working with Publications Ontario to provide all ministry publications in a wide variety of alternate formats when requested by ministry clients and the general public.

Action: To provide ministry publications in alternate formats when requested.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Commitment: MEDT will maintain and expand, as appropriate, its TTY (telephone for people with hearing disabilities) communications including awareness for clients and training of operators.

Action: Regular review and promotion of TTY communications, and training component.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.

Commitment: MEDT will continue to provide e-mail access to requests for information concerning ministry programs and services.

Action: Provision of ministry information via e-mail.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Built Environment

Commitment: MEDT will continue to apply Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October, 2004, when assessing and renovating all of its premises.

Action: Implement OBC and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October, 2004.

Timeframe: March 2006.

Commitment: MEDT will continue to ensure all signage in ministry premises complies with the letter and intent of the ODA, 2001.

Action: Signage to be improved/ upgraded where necessary.

Timeframe: March 2006.

Commitment: Using Human Resources and Facilities Branch reception as a best practice "barrier-free benchmark," MEDT will continue to review and renovate all Ministry reception counters to ensure barrier-free services to disabled clients and members of the public.

Action: Change counter heights where necessary.

Timeframe: March 2006.

Commitment: MEDT will continue its practice of sensitizing ministry management and staff, so that they are aware of the necessity to communicate with stakeholders or recipients of transfer payments who may have special needs eg. an application in braille or information provided in sign language.

Action: Communicate ODA, 2001 provisions to management and staff, and also communicate the new AODA, 2005 standards when they become available.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



Acts and Regulations

Commitment: MEDT will continue to review the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology Act, 1990. Chapter M.27 to ensure appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as identify any ministry programs established in law, that may impact on persons with

disabilities.

Action: Continue to review the act and make adjustments where necessary.

Timeframe: Ongoing in 2005-06.



For More Information

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

- General inquiry number: (416) 325-6666
- TTY number: (416) 325-4402
- 1-800 number: 1-866-668-4249
- E-mail: info@edt.gov.on.ca
- Ministry website address: www.ontariocanada.com

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario website](#). The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.



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