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Ministries of Economic Development and International Trade and Investment 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 access the services 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 Economic Development and Ministry of International Trade and Investment* (formerly the Ministry of Economic

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

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition from the Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) to the AODA.

The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of International Trade and Investment to build on. These ministries will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and build a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available [here](#).

***NOTE:** In September 2008 the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade was divided into two separate ministries: the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of International Trade and Investment. These are referred to as "the ministry" for the purposes of this report.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Establish ministry accessible customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Planned Action(s):

The OPS-wide corporate policy will address the accessible Customer Service Standard. The ministry will develop program specific accessible customer service practices and procedures, where required, to enhance the corporate-wide policy. The policies, practices and procedures will address: accessible format, feedback mechanisms, service animals, service disruption processes, framework for compliance monitoring and reporting, including performance measures and timelines and annual internal audits for ongoing improvements. This initiative is coordinated in connection with the rollout of the OPS Service Directive initiative, including communication and training.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – Dec 09

Results Achieved: To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

The ministry actively participated in the Customer Service – Standards Development Committee (CS-SDC) and assisted in the successful development of the new Customer Service Standard.

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

Develop and implement a ministry training strategy to target all staff.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will achieve this ongoing commitment by targeted training for management and staff who deliver external and internal services in the Ontario government. The ministry will continue to encourage and promote staff training on accessibility as part of their ongoing professional development. This includes the recommendation for all staff to participate in “May I Help You?: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities” e-learning course. This will also be accomplished through different ministry venues including all staff events, ministry forums and lunch and learn events. The importance of accessibility will also be addressed through every ministry orientation session for new staff. The ministry intranet site offers a host of information, resources and tools to increase awareness of accessibility. To monitor progress, the ministry will develop tracking and reporting processes.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

The ministry was proud to host a well attended, multi-ministry lunch and learn session in November 2007 on accessibility with guest speaker the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. His Honour provided a profound and passionate presentation about his mandate to improve the lives of those who live with physical disabilities.

The ministry also hosted another popular lunch and learn session to promote “Accessibility in our Communities and within our Workplaces.” This interactive session provided information to staff regarding the Ontario Dog Guide training program by the Lions Foundation of Canada, “Jaws” screen reading software by the I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence and information on Bell's relay service. The audience also experienced an “unfair hearing test” by the Canadian Hearing Society and received tips on how to plan an accessible event in their community or office. This session increased staff awareness and understanding on the importance of making meetings/events accessible and provided participants with information about the support systems available for people with different disabilities in our communities.

The National Access Awareness Week (May 2008) was promoted to all ministry staff. The “May I Help You?” course and the “ODA: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities” were promoted to all staff and management as part of their ongoing professional development.

The ministry also created an intranet web site which provides information, resources and tools to increase greater awareness and knowledge of how to accommodate visitors/clients/staff with disabilities.

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

The ministry will develop strategies for providing information in an accessible format to ensure compliance under the new Customer Service Standard.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will ensure that there will be communication materials and information available in each of the service delivery points which relate to meeting the Customer Service Standard.

The ministry's Communication and Public Affairs Branch will continue to offer alternate formats, whenever requested. In addition, they will continue to review publication formats and work with ServiceOntario Publications to provide alternate formats whenever requested. They will also ensure that the ministry websites meet or exceed the World Wide Web Consortium criteria.

TTY access will continue to be offered in the reception areas for Human Resources and the Communications and Public Affairs branches and the reception staff will be trained on how to operate the equipment.

The ministry will acquire business cards in braille as part of providing information in an accessible format.

The ministry will continue to promote the importance of planning accessible meetings and events. The ministry intranet site provides detailed information and resources on how to do this.

Each program area will review its programs and services on an ongoing basis to ensure they are accessible to clients and the public.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008:

TTY service is continually offered at these locations. A training session was arranged in June 2008 for reception and back-up staff by the Canadian Hearing Society to ensure that the key staff were knowledgeable on the operation of the TTY units.

A new intranet page was created to provide staff with more information, tools and resources on accessibility. The ministry intranet site also includes: the ministry's accessibility plans, resources, tools, tips, a guide to choosing the right terminology when talking about disabilities, information on how to plan accessible meetings, and a link for accessibility e-courses.

The ministry has continued its review of publication formats, and worked closely with clients and/or the public to ensure accessible formats were provided whenever requested.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Alert third-party service providers of the new accessibility standards for customer service.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will achieve this commitment by reviewing/amending existing agreements and adjusting wording in the template procurement agreements to reflect obligations, as required, and also to ensure compliance (e.g. training in accessible customer service).

The ministry plans to work with third parties to ensure that the targets and timetables meet compliance for the new customer service standard. Performance of third-party compliance will also be monitored.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – December 09

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: To be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

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

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Policy & Program

Commitment: Facilities, policies and practices will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to identify and remove (or prevent) barriers to employment and ensure every employee is able to achieve their full potential.

Planned Action(s): This is an ongoing practice and priority in the ministry.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force.

The ministry will play an active role in the development of the new Employment Accommodation Standard and participate in the Employee Accommodation - Standards Development Committee (EA-SDC).

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: This is an ongoing practice within the ministry.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Service

Commitment: Accommodating staff for a broad range of disabilities will be a priority.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to accommodate staff for a broad range of disabilities on a priority basis.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: In order to accommodate people with a broad range of disabilities, the ministry's human resources branch shared interview questions with candidates before interviews. Candidates were also asked prior to the interview if they required additional accommodation.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Program & Service

Commitment: To increase staff awareness about the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, 2001 and accessibility issues in general.

Planned Action (s): This is an ongoing practice in the ministry.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The accessibility e-courses were promoted to all ministry staff and additional information was included on the ministry intranet site, as well as in new employee orientation manuals. This was done to ensure greater awareness and knowledge of how to accommodate visitors/clients/staff with disabilities.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Policy & Service

Commitment: Information on the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, 2001 and related accessibility programs and services will be included in new employee orientation manuals.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to enhance and

include additional information to orientation manuals, as it becomes available, to ensure all new ministry employees have up-to-date information and knowledge on accessibility.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

The ministry will play an active role in the development of the new Communications and Information Standard and participate in the Communications and Information - Standards Development Committee (C&I-SDC).

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The detailed presentation on accessibility, including a tip sheet and other information, has been an integral part of each new employee orientation session.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Commitment: All staff will be encouraged to access the "Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities" e-learning module on the Centre for Leadership and Learning website.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to encourage all staff to participate in accessibility training and other accessibility events, as they become available, as part of their ongoing professional development.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: "The Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities" course was promoted to all management staff. Additional tools, information and resources have also been included on the ministry intranet site.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Commitment: The importance of using the correct terminology when communicating with or discussing persons with disabilities will be actively promoted and the "Talk About Disabilities - Use the Right Word" guide (from the Ministry of Community and Social Services) will be posted to our ministry intranet site.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to promote the use of correct terminology to assist staff when communicating and

interacting, with or about people, with different types of disabilities.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The “*Talk About Disabilities – Use the Right Word*” guide and other training resources were posted to the ministry intranet site for all ministry staff to access.

The lunch and learn session on “Accessibility in our Communities and within our Workplaces” also highlighted information on choosing the right terminology when talking about disabilities.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Program

Commitment: The visibility of the ministry’s accessibility plans will be raised through a modification of our intranet site.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to post the ministry’s accessibility plans and other relevant resource materials to the ministry intranet site for all staff to access.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: A dedicated ministry intranet web site was created to increase staff knowledge and awareness on accessibility. This web site includes the ministry’s accessibility plans as well as other resources, tools, tips and information - including how to choose correct terminology when talking about disabilities, how to plan accessible meetings, and a link to accessibility e-courses.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Program

Commitments: To ensure staff are aware of the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements on accessible procurement and use the Ontarians with Disabilities Procurement Requirements Checklist as a guideline.

Planned Action (s): The ministry will continue to ensure that staff are aware of *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements on accessible procurement.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: Information and resources related to the Ontarians with Disabilities Procurement Requirements guidelines and checklist was included on the ministry intranet site in a user friendly format for staff to access in an efficient manner.

Three separate training sessions were offered to ministry staff to increase their knowledge and awareness of the Ontarians with Disabilities Procurement Requirements and how to access information and resources related to Ontarians with disabilities.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy & Program

Commitment: All newly built or renovated spaces will meet or exceed the Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October 2004.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will continue to ensure that all renovated spaces will continue to meet these standards.

The Ontario Realty Corporation will be updating the current ORC barrier-free design standards. These standards are expected to meet or exceed the new Built Environment Standard.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Built Environment Standard comes into force.

The ministry will play an active role in the development of the new Built Environment Standard and participate in the Built Environment - Standards Development Committee (BE-SDC).

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The ministry completed one major infrastructure initiative: the Ontario Trade and Investment Centre at 250 Yonge Street in Toronto. Accessibility was included as a key design and construction priority in this location.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy & Program

Commitment: All workspaces will be designed and equipped to accommodate employees with a wide range of disabilities and/or functional limitations.

Planned Action(s): This is an ongoing practice and priority in the ministry.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Built Environment Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: This is an ongoing activity within the ministry.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: To ensure, where feasible, that all ministry locations are accessible to staff, clients and the public.

Planned Action (s): The ministry Facilities Branch will continue to review this issue on an ongoing basis.

Further review will be undertaken once the new Built Environment Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: A review was undertaken and it was confirmed that all ministry locations, where feasible, were in compliance.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts & Regulations

Commitment: The impact, if any, of new and amended acts or regulations on our facilities, policies, programs, practices and services will be tracked and reported on throughout the year.

Planned Action(s): The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts or regulations. The ministry Legal Branch will appoint a counsel to periodically advise program staff responsible for accessibility (as identified by corporate services) changes to the *Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act, 2005* and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: This is an ongoing practice. The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review or going forward, include accessibility as part of the review process.

Focus Areas: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts & Regulations

Commitment: To continue to remain current in our knowledge of accessibility-related legislation, regulations, standards and best practices and effectively apply those to our business and employment practices.

Planned Action(s): The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts or regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review, or going forward, include accessibility as part of the review process.

Other

Impact: Policy & Service

Commitments: To ensure staff awareness of *Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, 2001 requirements, and the importance of accessibility planning as part of the annual business cycle. To provide meaningful input into the annual planning process.

Planned Action (s): The ministry Accessibility Planning Team will continue to ensure that staff are provided with enhanced knowledge and awareness of the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, 2001 and other relevant requirements, the importance of accessibility planning as part of the annual business cycle, and given the opportunity to provide meaningful input into the process and the plan. They will also provide new employees with an orientation on accessibility and accessibility planning requirements.

Implementation Timeframe: October 08 – March 10

Results Achieved in 2007-2008: The ministry Accessibility Planning Team ensured that staff were provided with information about accessibility in a variety of formats and venues to raise awareness of accessibility in the ministry. Additionally, quarterly reports were presented to senior management to keep them apprised of our progress on meeting the accessibility commitments.

For More Information

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

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Ministry website address: <http://www.ontario.ca/economy>

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.

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

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