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Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2015 and future accessibility commitments for 2016.

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On this page

1. [Executive summary](#)
2. [Section one: report on measures taken by the ministry in 2015](#)
3. [Section two: report on measures proposed by the ministry for 2016](#)
4. [Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation](#)

Executive summary

Under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, ministries are required to produce, and make available to the public, annual plans that identify how ministries will identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

Like all ministries, the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation (MEDEI/MRI) complies with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service \(ASCS\)](#) and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#). These regulations establish phased-in requirements in the following accessibility standards:

- customer service
- information and communications

- employment
- transportation
- design of public spaces

In 2012, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) released its first multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) entitled [Accessibility in the Ontario Public Service: Leading the Way Forward](#).

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation's 2015 *ODA* Plan, celebrates the tenth anniversary of the *ODA* and demonstrates how the measures taken in 2015 and proposed for 2016 support the key outcomes and deliverables of the OPS MYAP, as we continue on our path to an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Above and beyond the commitments identified in last year's plan, the ministry made significant contributions towards improving accessibility in the Province of Ontario in 2015.

In November 2014, the Government of Ontario appointed the Honourable David C. Onley as a Special Advisor on Accessibility to champion opportunities for people of all abilities in the public and private sectors. As the Special Advisor, Mr. Onley has worked closely with Minister Duguid to continue breaking down barriers and promote the economic benefits of inclusion and employment of people with disabilities.

From August 8-10, 2015, the ministry organized and hosted the Accessibility Innovation Showcase (AIS) to coincide with the start of the Toronto 2015 Para/Pan American Games and the 25th anniversary of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. The AIS was endorsed by the International Paralympic Committee as an official Games event. This was the first-ever event of its kind held by the ministry which was designed to inspire public interest in accessibility for persons with disabilities by highlighting the latest advances in accessibility technology and assistive devices.

The Accessibility Innovation Showcase brought together top innovators, investors, and local and international dignitaries from the government and private sector. This high-profile, three-day event took place at the MaRS building in downtown Toronto. The AIS touched on everything from employment for people with disabilities to extraordinary innovations such as:

- assistive devices that can help the legally blind to see,
- therapies that improve voluntary motor function for individuals who have suffered from stroke or spinal cord injuries,
- demonstrations of wheelchairs that can climb stairs, and
- exoskeletal technology that can help paralyzed people walk

The goals of the Accessibility Innovation Showcase were to:

- raise the profile of accessibility
- demonstrate advances in technology and market-ready innovations; and,
- stimulate investment and growth in the industry

The [AIS](#) team worked closely with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to ensure that all accessibility requirements were met throughout the planning and execution of the event, and achieved the following results:

- 5,000 visitors attended the event over the three-day period
- recruited 66 volunteers and held a mandatory accessibility training session
- 14 experts from various organizations were on hand for the ask-the-expert sessions and generated more than 100 one-on-one meetings

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and Ministry of Research and Innovation is committed to accessibility for people with disabilities in our services, programs and business areas.

Section one: report on measures taken by the ministry in 2015

Customer service

[OPS MYAP](#) key outcome

People with disabilities who are [OPS](#) customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Commitments

- Develop a plan to review ministry policies, decision-making processes and administrative procedures using the [OPS](#) Inclusion Lens
- Require ministry staff to take the [OPS](#) Inclusion Lens training by December 31, 2015
- Continue to monitor opportunities to increase the use of the [OPS](#) Inclusion Lens to review internal policies, procedures and practices to assure that accessibility is considered whenever [OPS](#) business is conducted
- Advise staff of the [OPS](#) Inclusion Lens, which considers accessibility and encourages staff to incorporate the [OPS](#) Inclusion Lens into the early planning processes
- Ensure notice disruptions are posted in a conspicuous place and online if appropriate when services are unavailable

- Review the Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Branch Business Continuity Plans using the OPS Inclusion Lens
- Embed accessibility into all areas of planning, including Program Review, Renewal and Transformation (PRRT), Business Continuity and Emergency Planning. Planning will take the varied needs of people with disabilities into account at all levels of planning and response activities
- Consider accessibility related feedback received through all channels (e.g. online feedback form, correspondence, inquiries, meeting evaluations, etc.) by assessing and responding to feedback as required
- Collect feedback through the available channels (e.g. in person, telephone, in writing, by email or otherwise) and analyze feedback received to identify concerns.
- Review the existing feedback process and incorporate more efficient tracking and response mechanisms for accessibility related feedback.
- Ensure that the Diversity and Accessibility Leads take the OPS Inclusion Lens train-the-trainer sessions.
- Ensure staff complete mandatory accessibility training as soon as practicable.
- Provide training to designated staff and their back-ups on the use of ministry assistive devices and provide general information on assistive devices to all staff through the Intranet site.
- The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) will reach out to non-filers to advise them of their obligations and the regulatory steps that may be required to bring them into compliance with the AODA.
- The ADO will support the legislated review of the Customer Service Standard and develop a plan to address recommendations from the review, as required.

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

OPS inclusion lens/policies

- Encouraged staff to attend Inclusion Lens training provided through LearnON; via the ministry's Inclusion e-newsletter, highlighting the benefits of using the Lens.
- Promoted the OPS Inclusion Lens as a tool to review policies, programs and/or processes for general inclusiveness and accessibility.
- Reviewed emergency evacuation procedures and Branch Business Continuity Plans using the OPS Inclusion Lens.

Communications

- Launched an online accessibility-specific feedback channel and considered and responded to accessibility related feedback received through all channels.

- Implemented a more efficient tracking and response mechanism for accessibility-related feedback for more timely email and correspondence responses.
- Provided timely responses to Ministers' letters from the public and stakeholders; and made accommodations as required.
- Identified concerns received through the accessibility-related feedback channels (e.g. online feedback form, correspondence, inquiries, meeting evaluations, etc.) and assessed and responded to feedback as required.
- All correspondence and emails were answered within a timely manner (24 hours for emails and 48 hours for correspondence). An automated reply was sent for emails, and an interim reply for correspondence.

Training

- Diversity and Accessibility Leads completed the OPS Inclusion Lens train-the-trainer sessions as they became available.
- Continued to ensure staff completed mandatory accessibility training as soon as practicable.
- Provided training to designated staff and their back-ups on the use of ministry assistive devices (TTY) and provided information on assistive devices to all staff through the internal website.

Emergency planning and business continuity

- When and where applicable, the ministry ensured disruption notices were posted in a conspicuous place and online (if appropriate) when services were unavailable.
- Ensured accessibility practices were followed in all areas of planning, including Program Review, Renewal and Transformation (PRRT), Business Continuity and Emergency Planning. Planning accounted for the varied needs of people with disabilities.
- All emergency evacuation procedures were reviewed using the OPS Inclusion Lens.
- During Branch Business Continuity Planning training, all Leads were asked to review plans to ensure plans accommodate employees with disabilities.

Meeting and event planning

Over the last year, every effort was made to ensure that when hosting meetings, venues were accessible and arrangements were made to accommodate any participants who required additional supports.

- The Office of the Special Advisor, Accessibility meets regularly with individuals who have disabilities and challenges in mobility and speech, hearing, etc.

The Accessibility Innovation Showcase team worked closely with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to ensure that all accessibility requirements were met throughout the planning and execution of this event and

several steps were taken to ensure:

- The event was accessible to the public and admission was free.
- Companies exhibiting were not charged for participating in this inaugural event.
- Participation and attendance was widely promoted through various partner websites, associations and not-for profit organizations.
- Exhibitors were selected through a fair and unbiased Expression of Interest process.
- AIS staff and 66 volunteers received customized, interactive training on accessibility.
- A first-aid responder was available throughout the duration of the event and an Emergency Evacuation Plan was put in place.

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

The ADO actively reached out to non-filing organizations to advise them of their obligations and the regulatory steps that may be required to bring them into compliance with the AODA. Through the process the ADO:

- enhanced its accessibility feedback telephone line, contacting over 1,200 organizations and completing general audits to ensure organizations have fulfilled their obligations under the Act, and launched a new correspondence process that will improve coordination and processes when responding to public inquiries
- prepared regulatory amendments to the Customer Service Standard to support government decisions resulting from the review of the Customer Service Standard
- posted a detailed summary in November 2015 of the proposed amendments to the Customer Service Standard to the Regulatory Registry for public comment. These amendments are largely based on the recommendations of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standards Development Committee

Information and Communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Commitments

- Continue to ensure that staff have updated information about protocols, hiring processes, budgets and account codes for dealing with alternate formats and communication support requests and to create accessible events through Intranet updates and all-staff communications.

By January 1, 2016 and in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, the ministry Internet websites and web content on those websites will conform with WCAG 2.0 level AA, excluding success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded).

- By January 1, 2020 and in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, the ministry Internet and Intranet websites and web content on those sites will conform to WCAG 2.0 level AA, including live captioning and audio description. Content published prior to 2012 to be made available in an accessible format upon request.
- Ensure that the ministry arranges for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports in a timely manner upon request and continue to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.
- Work with web application vendors to improve accessibility scores where gaps have been identified on the ministry Intranet site.
- Provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in an accessible format or with communication supports.
- Information about emergency procedures, plans or public safety continues to be made available to the public upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable.
- Update information on emergency planning for employees with disabilities and special needs on the ministry Intranet site.
- Send ministry delegates, including employees with disabilities, to the JOIN conference.
- Ensure staff are aware of their accessibility obligations, and continue to provide guidance and support.
- The ADO will continue to work with umbrella organizations to deliver direct training to the public and private sector via webcast, as well as ensuring training materials are available to access via the [Access Forward](#) web portal developed in 2012-13.

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

MEDEI/MRI is responsive to feedback and provided accessible formats and communications supports in a timely manner upon request, and continues to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications on its Internet site. The ministry is working with several partners to ensure that internal and external communications channels continue to meet the needs of staff and the general public.

The Office of the Special Advisor on Accessibility has an established TTY telephone line for those with speech and hearing challenges.

Internal Communication

- Staff and/or management received updates through OPS-wide channels such as IFIS Updates, HR Communicates, and OPS Weekly. Where appropriate, the ministry sent information about improving accessibility through internal postings on the Intranet and all staff communications.
- The ministry continued to collaborate with the Cabinet Office and insisted upon accessible internal communications.
- Continued to ensure that staff received information on training requirements and completed mandatory accessibility training as soon as practicable. In addition, staff attended six supplementary training sessions to provide guidance and support on accessibility requirements.
- The ministry has continued to ensure staff received current information about protocols, hiring process, budgets and how to support staff that require accommodation support or assistive devices.

Public internet site

As of January 1, 2016, the ministry Internet websites and web content on those websites conformed to international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) - WCAG 2.0 level AA, excluding success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded).

In 2015, the ministry provided feedback mechanisms for the public through a range of communication channels, including:

- email contact through the ministry Internet site, telephone, TTY and mail.
- continued to collaborate with the Cabinet Office to remediate MEDEI/MRI digital assets hosted on Ontario.ca to meet the January 1, 2016 deadline.
- collaborated with the Cabinet Office to migrate the ministry websites to the Ontario.ca platform, positioning the site as the online destination for all government information and services. Websites migrated included Infrastructure, and AccessON.
- the InvestInOntario.com site was remediated to align with WCAG 2.0 level AA, excluding success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded).
- in collaboration with the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIIT), the SourceFromOntario.com website and Source Match Making tool were rebranded and remediated to align with WCAG 2.0 level AA, excluding success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded).
- continued to collaborate with the I&IT Cluster to ensure websites conform to WCAG 2.0 level AA, including live captioning and audio description by the January 2020 deadline.
- provided alternate accessible formats upon request and promoted other accessible communications supports where available.
- worked with web application vendors to improve accessibility scores.

- documents posted to the ministry website were remediated for accessibility prior to online posting or publication.

Emergency and business continuity planning

The ministry has an Intranet site available for all staff with resources to assist in emergency planning for people with disabilities. This Intranet page is updated on a quarterly basis or as new information or material is available. The resources include:

- evacuation procedures for people with disabilities
- emergency evacuation plan template
- evacuation assistance form
- emergency preparedness guide for people with disabilities
- upon request, all emergency procedures, plans and other documents are available in accessible formats

Training

- Increased awareness and education about removing barriers by participating in the Accessibility Innovation Showcase and attending the [Jobs Opportunities Information Network \(JOIN\) conference](#).
- Delivered six training sessions to staff to raise awareness about accessibility requirements, and provide guidance and support.
- Continued to ensure staff receive information on training requirements and completed mandatory accessibility training as soon as practicable.
- Staff attended supplementary ministry training on creating accessible Word documents and emails.

Ministry publications and events

To support incremental steps to an accessible Ontario, the [ADO](#) continued to work with umbrella organizations to deliver direct training to the public and private sector via webcast, as well as ensuring training materials were available to access via the [Access Forward](#) web portal developed in 2012-13.

The [ADO](#) hosted webinars and workshops on the Information and Communication Standard for the private non-profit and public sector organizations. The 2015 EnAbling Change Program helped produce:

- Wilfred Laurier University “Enabling Access Through Web Renewal” handbook – a technical guide on how to comply with the Information and Communications Standard
- Association of Registered Graphic Designers “Access Ability: A Practical Handbook on Accessible Web Design” that focused on industry accessibility standards for websites
- The Council of Universities “Accessible Campus” website has a section on suggested approaches

on how to comply with the Information and Communication Standard

- Ontario Trails Council “Guide for Accessible Web Design” that focused on the importance of accessible information for trails and outdoor spaces
- documents posted to the ministry website were remediated for accessibility prior to online posting or publication

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation produced a series of publications based on innovative research and insights shared by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Presidents of Ontario's leading growth firms.

- The [Leading Growth Firms Series](#) researches and promotes the effective leadership and management practices of CEOs, presidents and owners of Ontario's innovative high-growth firms. Leading Growth Firms publications are accessible in both print and web versions.
- The [Wisdom Exchange](#), a unique peer-to-peer forum open exclusively to Presidents, CEOs and owners of high-growth, innovative Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Ontario is an annual forum where CEOs, presidents and owners of Ontario's high-growth firms participate in timely workshops, share best practices, and learn from insightful speakers. All Wisdom Exchange event materials were fully accessible.

As part of the Accessible Innovation Showcase, organizers ensured that:

- public communications for the event were developed as accessible documents and available in multiple formats in both English and French
- recruitment materials (exhibitor, investor and volunteers) were developed as accessible documents and available in multiple formats
- all content on the dedicated event website pages was accessible
- promotional advertisements were developed for print and web
- staff and volunteers with language capabilities other than English were identified by their name tags along with the languages spoken
- visitors were provided with additional services on-site during the event such as American Sign Language Interpretation, Communication Access Real-time Translation and professional attendants

Employment

[MYAP](#) key outcome

[OPS](#) employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

2015 Commitments

- Promote iManage and its links to the employment accommodation directives, policies and plans through the Intranet site and/or various corporate and ministry Human resources initiatives, as appropriate.
- Coordinate the annual multi-ministry Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program.
- Post the Inclusion Strategy on the Intranet site and promote sample inclusion commitments developed by the OPS Diversity Office (ODO).
- Post all ministry and division performance commitments on the Intranet site.
- Analyze ministry responses from the 2014 OPS Employee Survey results to assess potential barriers to employees with disabilities.
- Recommend the inclusion commitments developed by the ODO to all Management Compensation Plan (MCP) and Senior Management Group (SMG) employees at the start of each new performance management cycle.
- Require all senior executives to include a ministry-specific inclusion commitment in their annual plan.
- Promote the use of accessible communication practices through the Intranet site to staff. Practices encourage the use of accessible formats and the importance of constant monitoring to ensure accessibility.
- Raise awareness of persons with disabilities so they can prepare for their own safety and survival during times of evacuation through the semi-annual in-house fire warden training.
- Provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in accessible formats or with communication supports as required.
- The ADO will actively reach out to the public and private sectors to help them understand their obligations under the AODA and meet their accessibility requirements. To support incremental steps to an accessible Ontario, the ADO will partner with Epilepsy Toronto to launch the following:
 - an online, multimedia e-course for co-workers working with someone with epilepsy, with an additional module for employers of people with epilepsy
 - an interactive video simulator which will give viewers the experience of providing assistance to someone having a seizure

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

As an employer, the ministry is working to attract and retain talented employees including those with disabilities by modelling fair hiring practices in the recruitment process.

Training/resources

- Developed a ministry Management Toolkit to provide management with easier access to information

related to employment accommodation directives, policies and plans and promoted the use of iManage.

- Informed managers of the mandatory “Disability Accommodation” e-course and “Supporting Employees: Employment Accommodation and Attendance Support” in-class training available through LearnON.
- Fire wardens were provided with instructions on how to assist employees and visitors with disabilities during the semi-annual fire warden training.
- Designated meeting spots continue to be identified for persons with disabilities on all ministry floors.

Human resources and accommodation requests

- Provided employee accommodation and supports for employees returning to work after an extended medical leave.
- Supported employees who requested and/or received employment accommodation, relative to performance management, career development and redeployment.
- Encouraged staff with accessibility requirements to self-identify so that their accommodation needs can be met. As a best practice, staff are asked to self-identify in invites for meetings and training sessions and all accommodation requests are met.
- The ministry has responded to requests to meet the accommodation requirements of the Special Advisor on Accessibility.
- The AIS team included a team member with disabilities who was provided with accommodations to ensure success and ability to fully participate in meaningful work.

Mentoring and performance plans

- Coordinated the 2015-16 multi-ministry Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program in accordance with the ODO timelines, resulting in 26 partnerships.
- Posted the 2013-2016 Inclusion Plan on the Inclusion Intranet page. At the beginning of the 2015-16 performance cycle, the ministry provided sample commitments about compliance with AODA requirements. The communication also included a sample of the inclusion performance commitments developed by the ODO.
- The ministry requires all senior executives to include a ministry-specific inclusion commitment for the 2015-16 performance management cycle as a requirement in Performance Rating Assessments. All MCP and SMG staff were asked to include 2015-16 Performance Commitments and provided with a link to the sample menu from the ODO portal.
- Staff were provided with ministry development commitments related to accessibility and inclusion.
- The ministry posted all ministry and divisional performance commitments on the Intranet site for the

2015-16 performance cycle.

- Each division was tasked with identifying priority areas based on their respective survey results and employee feedback. None of the divisions identified barriers to employees with disabilities as a subject to be addressed in their divisional Employee Engagement Action Plan.

Communication tools

- Promoted and provided tools through various channels that encouraged the use of accessible formats.
- Communicated a short story about the Disability Support Strategy on the Intranet site to assist staff's understanding of the new approach to employee accommodation in the ministry.

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

- The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario has actively reached out to the public and private sectors to help them understand their obligations under the AODA and meet their accessibility requirements. To support incremental steps to an accessible Ontario, the ADO in partnership with the following organizations took the following measures:
- In partnership with Epilepsy Toronto, the ADO launched:
- An online, multimedia e-course for co-workers working with someone with Epilepsy, with an additional module for employers of people with epilepsy.
- An interactive video simulator which will give viewers the experience of providing assistance to someone having a seizure.
- In partnership with the Retail Council of Canada, the ADO has developed a five part online module that focuses on employment of people with disabilities in the retail sector.
- The ADO partnered with the Conference Board of Canada to re-release the Employer's Toolkit on Accessible Employment. The Conference Board of Canada also conducted regional private/non-profit sector workshops on accessible employment across Ontario.

Built Environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Commitments

- The ministry will work with property management to ensure that all newly built or renovated spaces will meet or exceed the *Ontario Building Code* and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) Guidelines for Barrier Free and Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

- Schedule regular meetings between the Accessibility Lead and Facilities Manager to discuss accommodation issues within the existing ministry infrastructure.
- Assessment will be conducted to further enhance accessibility at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre (OITC) by retrofitting meeting room doors.
- To support incremental steps to an accessible Ontario related to the design of public spaces, the ADO will:
 - Continue to work with the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments on two more EnAbling Change Partnership projects focusing on the Design of Public Spaces: A Technical Guide to the Design of Public Spaces and Online Learning Modules for Professionals.
 - Release an easy-to-read Handbook on the Design of Public Spaces to help the general public and employers understand the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces, the requirements and what needs to be communicated to design professionals/planners when constructing or redeveloping an accessible public space.

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

The ministry has oversight of the Major Projects Division of Infrastructure Ontario (IO), responsible for procuring and managing the construction of provincial infrastructure using Alternative Finance and Procurement. Infrastructure Ontario is also committed to implementing various accessibility requirements throughout their business dealings with the vendor community and related to construction of new buildings.

- The [Guidelines for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities](#) were updated to ensure that all newly built or renovated spaces meet or exceed the enhanced accessibility requirements under the amended *Ontario Building Code* that came into effect January 1, 2015.
- The ministry and its partner IO have ensured that all project and asset management staff have been trained on the updates to the *Ontario Building Code* and the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The ministry ensured that alterations to existing facilities and any new construction were designed and implemented in compliance with Infrastructure Ontario Guidelines for Barrier-free Design in Ontario Government Facilities (these standards are equivalent to or higher than the *Ontario Building Code* barrier-free design requirements).

The ministry worked with property management to ensure that all newly built or renovated spaces meet or exceed the *Ontario Building Code* and Infrastructure Ontario standards. In 2015, the ministry commissioned an accessibility study to identify upgrades and requirements to improve overall accessibility at 900 Bay Street. Based on the 2015 accessibility study, key findings were grouped as follows:

- parking

- paths of circulation
- building entrance, exits and lobby space
- interior stairs
- signage
- safety concerns
- washrooms
- office and administrative areas

Projects completed included:

- the revitalization of the galleria floor at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre (250 Yonge Street, Toronto).
- improvements to the 5th floor Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto:
 - newly built office space is wheelchair accessible; elevators, workstations and hallways have accessible features, doors are equipped with automatic openers.
 - the executive office was upgraded to improve accessibility features - a marble threshold was removed and a grab bar was added.
- in addition, all third-party service providers doing work on behalf of the OPS have received the appropriate accessibility training as provided by Infrastructure Ontario.
- the Accessibility Innovation Showcase was held in an accessible venue where additional measures and facilities upgrades were put in place in time for the event. Examples included additional accessible parking spots, door operators added to all public washrooms and the development of a Guest Accessibility Package (GAP).

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

- The ADO worked with the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments on two more EnAbling Change Partnership projects focusing on the [Design of Public Spaces: A Technical Guide to the Design of Public Spaces](#), and Online Learning Modules for Professionals and created the Parks and Recreation Ontario publication: [Pathways to Recreation: Learning about Ontario's Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces](#), a guidebook to help organizations comply with the *Design of Public Spaces Standard*.
- The ADO completed 19 outreach events related to the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* in 2015 such as regional workshops, accessibility forums, speaking engagements and webinars. Highlights include:
 - a regional workshop with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute focused on technical resources for compliance.

- The Ontario Good Roads Association/Rural Ontario Municipality Association Combined Conference joint forum with the ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the intersections of the *Ontario Building Code* and the *AODA*.
- the County of Simcoe, Northern Ontario Municipality Association, and Ontario Small Urban Municipalities staff presentation on accessible public space design.
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference presentation focused on upcoming accessible public space requirements.
- two Ontario Network of Professionals regional workshops that focused on upcoming requirements.
- a webinar on the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* targeting private, non-profit and public sector organizations.
- a regional workshop focused on upcoming requirements in the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* with York Region staff.

Transportation

MYAP key outcome

The OPS is committed to improving the availability of accessible transportation services to all Ontarians and has taken steps to ensure that accessible transportation services are available for people with disabilities.

Commitments

- The ADO will continue to work with municipalities to support them in the implementation of transportation requirements, including regional workshops, accessibility forums, webinars, e-newsletters, and articles in municipal publications.
- The ADO will continue to participate in a number of committees to advise on accessibility issues related to planning the transportation of spectators during the Pan/Parapan American Games.

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

To support incremental steps to an accessible Ontario related to transportation, the ADO continued to work with municipalities and other public sector organizations to support them in implementing the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Transportation, including participating in regional workshops, accessibility forums, webinars, and contributing to e-newsletters and articles in municipal publications, as required.

- The ADO completed consultation with public transportation providers in April 2015 on how to increase compliance with the Standard.
- The ADO presented at the Ontario Professional Planners Institute conference in October 2015, and

held webinars to help broader public sector organizations (e.g. transit providers) understand their obligations.

The ADO advised on accessibility issues related to planning the transportation of spectators during the Pan/Parapan American Games.

- The Directorate was pleased to participate on the Pan Parapan American Transportation Team (PATT) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) demonstrated a significant level of accessibility commitment which extended to its many delivery partners, including municipalities, public transit and specialized transit services.
- These partnerships contributed to a number of significant accomplishments including the Call One service for accessible transit bookings across regions, the 2015 Games Trip Planner that drivers could use to find important accessibility information, the Triplinx app that public transit users used to find important information about accessible stations and stops, and finally the Accessibility Guides which outlined the travel considerations people of all abilities needed to be aware of before they headed to the events.

Leadership

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility, in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the organization.

Commitments

The ministry will continue to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario by:

- Posting the Ministry Accessibility Plan and updating the ministry Intranet site with additional resources and materials for all staff as it becomes available.
- Developing a plan to assist the ministry in meeting its IASR obligations.
- Continuing to increase awareness of mental illness in the workplace by promoting OPS resources, seminars and events.

Measures taken by (MEDEI/MRI) in 2015

- Posted the Ministry Accessibility Plan on the ministry Intranet. Staff were able to access additional resources and the information was updated on the site as it became available.
- Provided ongoing support and advice to staff related to IASR obligations.
- Coordinated a Ministry Wellness Fair focused on mental health awareness. The fair included three exhibitors that provided tools and resources to cope with mental health issues (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Shepell.FGI, Strategic Zone Yoga).

- Provided regular updates to staff, managers and Directors relating to the completion of mandatory accessibility training.
 - Hosted a Lunch and Learn on raising awareness on accessibility in Ontario, delivered by the ADO and Special Advisor to the Minister on Accessibility, the Honourable David Onley.
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Section two: report on measures proposed by the ministry for 2016

In 2016, the ministry will focus on the following priorities, each with specific measures, which support the OPS multi-year accessibility plan deliverables and the individual accessibility standards. This section provides an overview of these goals and measures.

Customer service

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures Proposed by (MEDEI/MRI) for 2016

Accessibility continues as a strong organizational commitment, and the ministry will continue to encourage and support employees in the following areas:

Policies/OPS inclusion lens

- Encourage staff to attend the OPS Inclusion Lens training through LearnON.
- Monitor opportunities to increase the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens to review internal policies, procedures and practices to assure that accessibility is considered whenever OPS business is conducted.

Communications

- Utilize available tracking and response mechanisms for accessibility-related feedback.
- Increase awareness of accessibility requirements in stakeholder and public communications and customer service to the public.
- Continue to collect feedback received through all channels (e.g., online feedback form, correspondence, inquiries, meeting evaluations, in-person, telephone, in writing, by email or otherwise), analyze feedback received to identify concerns, and respond to feedback as required.
- Continue to work with Infrastructure Ontario and CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) to ensure notifications are posted in a timely manner when renovations are taking place.

Training

- Ensure staff complete mandatory accessibility training as soon as practicable.
- Continue to provide training to designated staff and their back-ups on the use of ministry assistive devices (TTY), and provide general information on assistive devices to all staff through the Intranet site.
- Diversity and Accessibility Leads will continue to complete the OPS Inclusion Lens train-the-trainer sessions as they become available.

Emergency and business continuity planning

- Embed accessibility into all areas of planning, including Program Review, Renewal and Transformation (PRRT), procurement, Business Continuity and Emergency Planning. Planning will take the varied needs of people with disabilities into account at all levels of planning and response activities.
- Continue to review Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Branch Business Continuity Plans using the OPS Inclusion Lens.

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

- The ADO will support government decisions resulting from the review of the Customer Service Standard, and continue to collect data from the accessibility feedback line and reach out to non-filers to advise them of their obligations under the AODA.
- The ADO will continue to work towards bringing the amended Customer Service Standard into effect.

Information and Communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Measures proposed by (MEDEI/MRI) for 2016

Public internet site(s)

- The ministry will continue to ensure that Internet websites and web content on those websites conform with WCAG 2.0 level AA, excluding success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded).
- Continue to collaborate with the Cabinet Office to migrate ministry websites to Ontario.ca, positioning the site as the online destination for all government information and services.

- Web Coordinators will continue to work with program staff on the development of accessible websites and web content.
- Accessibility criteria built into decision-making, project management, procurement, technology, infrastructure, I&IT and training.
- By January 1, 2020, and in collaboration with the Cabinet Office and its I&IT Cluster, the ministry Internet and Intranet websites and web content on those sites will conform to WCAG 2.0 level AA, including live captioning and audio description.
- Ensure that the ministry arranges for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports in a timely manner upon request and continue to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.
- Accessibility remediation is performed in the document format required such as Word, PDF, etc. to ensure that information is accessible to everyone.
- Work with web application vendors to improve accessibility scores where gaps have been identified on ministry internal website.

Communications

- The ministry will continue to ensure that staff have updated information and train staff about protocols, hiring processes, budgets and account codes to deal with alternate formats and communication support requests and to create accessible events through the ministry Intranet site and update all staff communications.
- The ministry will continue to make staff aware of the tools and resources available to help them prepare content in an accessible format.

Emergency and business continuity planning

- The ministry will continue to ensure procedures are in place to provide information about emergency procedures, plans or public safety to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request, as soon as practicable.
- The ministry Intranet site will continue to be updated to include information on emergency planning for employees with disabilities and special needs.

Ministry publications and events

- Continue to support participation in the annual JOIN conference.
- Continue to provide event materials and publications in an accessible format as required.
- Ontario Investment and Trade Centre (OITC) services and improvements:
- create an OITC Guest Accessibility Package that describes the accessible features of the facilities.

- include Guest Accessibility Package as an appendix to the client Facility Usage Agreement.
- provide the Guest Accessibility Package on the [OITC](#) web pages.
- develop accessible floor plans for room set-ups.
- provide accessible floor plans on the [OITC](#) web pages.
- use accessible friendly tools (Fluid) to conduct client satisfaction surveys.

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

- The [ADO](#) will continue to work with umbrella organizations to develop tools and resources that will support the implementation of the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

Employment

[MYAP](#) key outcome

[OPS](#) employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures proposed by ([MEDEI/MRI](#)) for 2016

Training/resources

- The ministry plans to launch the “Management Toolkit” to all managers. The ministry will continue to seek opportunities to promote iManage and its links to the employment accommodation directives, policies and plans through Staffnet and/or various corporate and ministry [HR](#) initiatives, as appropriate.
- The ministry will continue to require all senior executives to include a ministry-specific inclusion commitment for each new performance management cycle as a requirement in Performance Rating Assessments.
- The ministry will continue to train and promote to staff, through the Intranet site, the use of accessible communications practices. Practices encourage the use of accessible formats and the importance of constant monitoring to ensure accessibility.
- The ministry will continue to raise awareness on people with disabilities, so staff can be prepared for their own safety and survival during times of evacuation through in-house fire warden training offered semi-annually.

Communications

- The ministry's Lunch and Learn program will continue to provide annual information sessions to staff on emergency preparedness in order to provide additional information on emergency planning for people with disabilities.
- Continue to provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in accessible formats

or with communication supports as required.

Human resources and accommodation requests

- Encourage ministry managers to work directly with the Disability Support Services (DSS) to ensure they receive information about best practices for employment accommodation and return to work cases and provide suitable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Continue to provide assistance with accommodations requirements as needed.

Mentoring and performance plans

- The ministry will continue to coordinate the annual multi-ministry Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program as part of the OPS Diversity Office timelines.
- The ministry will continue to post the Inclusion Plan on the Inclusion Intranet page and promote sample inclusion performance commitments developed by the OPS Diversity Office.
- Post all ministry and division performance commitments on the Intranet site for each new performance cycle.
- Analyze the 2016/17 Employee Survey results to determine if there is a need to address employment accommodation strategies at the ministry and/or divisional level.
- Continue to recommend to all MCP and SMG employees that the inclusion commitments developed by the OPS Diversity Office are included at the start of each new performance management cycle.

Internal website

- Provide a variety of resources and ongoing information and resources on emergency planning and preparedness for people with disabilities.
- Continue to promote to staff, through the ministry internal website and various internal communications channels, the use of accessible communications for the public.

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

- The ADO will continue to actively reach out to the public and private sector to help them understand their obligations under the AODA and meet their accessibility requirements.

Built Environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by (MEDEI/MRI) for 2016

Facilities/public space improvements

- Based on study recommendations from the 2015 Accessibility Study, project leads will develop a plan to initiate action in 2016. MEDEI/MRI has requested that IO develop a plan, including the allocation of funding. In 2016, the following initiatives will take place at 900 Bay St, Toronto (Hearst and Mowat Block):
 - parking: Infrastructure Ontario/CB Richard Ellis to initiate planned structural repairs to provide type A parking space closest to the Mowat Block and type B parking near the Hearst Entrance both complete with accessible aisle and signage.
 - signage: The ministry will commence a signage plan to revamp all existing signage to meet AODA criteria within ministry space.
 - washrooms: Infrastructure Ontario/CBRE will move forward to create a fully accessible universal washroom on the 5th floor of the Mowat Block.
 - office and administrative areas: The ministry will install accessibility buttons in the Minister's Office suite (8th floor, Hearst Block)
- Work with an accessibility specialist to do a review of the OITC to determine where further enhancements can be made.
- The ministry will continue to schedule regular meetings between the Accessibility Lead and Facilities Manager to discuss accommodation issues within the existing ministry infrastructure.
- The Guidelines for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities be reviewed and updated, as required, to ensure full compliance with all accessibility-related requirements under the *Ontario Building Code*.

Transportation

MYAP key outcome

The OPS is committed to improving the availability of accessible transportation services to all Ontarians and has taken steps to ensure that accessible transportation services are available for people with disabilities.

Measures proposed by (MEDEI/MRI) for 2016

- The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will continue to work with municipalities and other public sector organizations to support them in implementing the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Transportation, including participating in regional workshops, accessibility forums, webinars, and contributing to e-newsletters and articles in municipal publications, as required.
 - The ADO will support the initiation of the mandated review of the Transportation Standard.
-

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

Background

The *ODA* establishes that a ministry's accessibility plan shall include:

- measures currently in place to address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in the Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services administered by the ministry
- actions taken in response to barriers found in Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services that were identified for review in 2015
- list of Acts, regulations, policies, practices, programs and services it will review in the coming year

Introduction

The *ODA* establishes that a ministry's accessibility plan shall include the measures in place to address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in the Acts, regulations, policies, programs and services administered by the ministry.

In 2005, the government introduced the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. In support of this goal, the government subsequently committed to review Ontario legislation to identify and address accessibility barriers, and undertook a coordinated review of 51 statutes considered to have a high impact on people with disabilities. This review has now been completed.

Our ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities. We will continue to report through our accessibility plan, the actions taken to identify and remove barriers in ministry Acts, regulations, policies, programs and services and those to be reviewed in the coming year. The findings of the coordinated review of high impact statutes will inform our ministry's approach to carry out this work.

Measures currently in place

The following measures are in place to assess our ministry's proposals for new Acts, regulations, policies and programs, and services to determine their effect on persons with disabilities:

- the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) and Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) have received all the templates from participating ministries and are currently reviewing ministries' findings. *MAG* and *MGCS* will work with the Cabinet Office to determine how to best coordinate the process of remedying statutory accessibility barriers across government
- the ministry will continue to report on the progress of the review in the 2015 annual accessibility plan

- the [ADO](#) will address recommendations resulting from the Second Legislative Review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* once the government has formulated a response to Provost Moran's final report

Actions taken in the past year

In 2015, the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation took the following actions to address barriers in its Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services in response to identified barriers:

- The Legal Services Branch worked with the [ADO](#) and ministry partners to implement their instructions for remedying statutory accessibility barriers in Ontario.
- In 2015, *AODA*, [O.Reg.429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) - was amended effective March 30, 2015: [O.Reg. 65/15](#) amended s.2 of [O. Reg. 212/14](#), (which amends [O. Reg. 429/07](#)): "Section 2 of *Ontario Regulation 212/14* is amended by striking out "the later of March 31, 2015 and the day it is filed" at the end and substituting "October 1, 2015".
- The results of the Second Legislative Review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* were tabled in the Ontario Legislature in February 2015.
- An interim response was released at the time of tabling and a full government response was released in June 2015 along with the release of the Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan, which also addresses a number of Moran's recommendations.

Upcoming plans for review

In the coming year, the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Research and Innovation will review the Acts, regulations, policies, programs practices and/or services listed below for barriers to persons with disabilities.

- The [ADO](#) will continue to implement commitments outlined in the government response to the Moran Report, as well as in the Accessibility Action Plan, including the release of an annual Compliance Action Plan, and the development of a voluntary, third party accessibility certification program.
- The Legal Services Branch will continue to work with the ministry to remedy statutory accessibility barriers across government and in Ontario.

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[Ontario's accessible customer service policy](#)

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