

Ministry of Energy 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Message From the Minister](#)
- [Report on Achievements of 2003-2004 Planning Commitments](#)
- [Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005](#)
 - [Legislative Requirements](#)
 - [Acts and Regulations](#)
 - [Policies](#)
 - [Programs and Services](#)
 - [Practices](#)
- [For more information](#)

Introduction

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Energy. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

Message From the Minister



I am pleased to present the Ministry of Energy's second annual accessibility plan. I believe that it is extremely important for the Ontario Public Service to be an accessible and inclusive employer and service provider, and our ministry is committed to doing its part.

Our accessibility plan includes a report on efforts to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. Of note this year, the Ministry of Energy continues to add accessibility features to its website. Our site now provides access to all major sections using simple keystrokes or "access keys" – allowing persons unable to use a mouse to access all areas of our site.

The achievements highlighted in this year's plan, as well as the commitments to make further improvements in the coming year, demonstrate our ministry's efforts to support the government's commitment to make Ontario's communities strong, vital and accessible to people of all abilities.

The Ministry of Energy remains committed to ensuring that all Ontarians have access to our organization. We fully support the government's plan to introduce measures aimed at making the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 strong and effective.

Honourable Dwight Duncan

Minister of Energy

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004 : Planning Commitments

Commitment: Ensure that all new managers, as part of their ministry orientation, complete ODA training so that the ministry maintains its 100 percent rating.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Develop a best practices guide to ensure staff consider ODA issues when inviting people to our organization. This could be for interviews, conferences, stakeholder meetings, other government staff who come so we can ensure that any necessary accommodation is made.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Conduct an internal review and update our human resources performance management policy to ensure that all management staff performance agreements include a learning component related to accessibility issues.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Continue to work with the Ontario Realty Corporation and building management to ensure barriers identified in common areas are addressed and eliminated.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Ensure that all accessible washrooms have grab bars installed.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Ensure all hallways are lit clearly and free of clutter to allow full and safe access and ensure all lighting in targeted facilities provides the optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees with visual impairments.

Status: Ongoing.

Commitment: Conduct an accessibility audit in all reception/public areas to identify communication and architectural barriers.

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe: Completed initial internal review. Conducting full audit in fall 2004.

Rationale: Hiring consultant to complete audit report by end of November 2004.

Commitment: Conduct an employee survey to assess level of knowledge about accessibility issues.

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe: Commencing fall 2004 (late September 2004)

Rationale: Questions developed; awaiting appropriate timing for release.

Commitment: Update the ministry "employment accommodation for people with disabilities" operating policy to ensure the ODA is fully reflected and communicate this document to all ministry staff.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Continue to abide by the ministry specific "employment accommodation for people with disabilities" operating policy requirements and ensure those staff who require

specific accommodations obtain them in a timely manner.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Continue to ensure all new material posted on the ministry's Internet site complies with standards for usability by people with disabilities, reflecting the broad definition of "disability" under ODA.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Ensure that the learning plan for our webmaster includes knowledge of adaptive technologies and accessible website design.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Conduct a review of the ministry Intranet site to identify potential barriers to staff with disabilities and, if necessary, upgrade the ministry Intranet site so that it is fully accessible by all ministry staff.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Provide guidance on procedures for responding to requests for publications in accessible format to all staff.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Give Managers and supervisors guidance on having regard to accessibility in all procurement activities and receive the procurement guidelines.

Status: In Progress.

Action and Timeframe: Ongoing.

Rationale: As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government's recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment: Provide guidance to policy and program development staff on how to include accessibility in proposals.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Review operating proposals put forward in 2004/05 business plan to ensure accessibility is taken into consideration.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Ensure policies, proposals and contracts consider the perspectives of people with disabilities.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Ensure that items brought forward under the program review exercise are also reviewed for accessibility requirements.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Ensure that staff training programs developed by the ministry include the provision of the ODA.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Update and enhance the Ontarians with Disabilities Act information page on the ministry Intranet site. Present information includes protocols on providing publication in alternative formats and a variety of questions and answers.

Status: Completed and ongoing.

Commitment: Review the Ontario Energy Board Amendment Act (Electricity Pricing), 2003 internally to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as to identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

Status: Completed.

Commitment: Ensure the ministry call centre has a TTY line.

Status: Completed.

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

Legislative Requirements

Commitment: Implement guidelines on procurement to ensure that ministry staff are informed and comply with the new guidelines.

Action: Staff with procurement responsibility will be provided with the guidelines which will provide guidance on implementation of guidelines for ODA.

Timeframe: 2004-05.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment: Review the following acts internally to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

- The Energy Efficiency Act, RSO 1990
- Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act, 2002

Action: Engage Legal staff to conduct review.

Timeframe: Commencing fall/winter 2004 (mid November 2004).

Policies

Commitment: Contracts with service providers will ensure accessibility requirements are met.

Action: Ensure accessibility requirements are included in annual negotiation of service level agreements.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Commitment: Specifications in place for procurement of furniture and furniture accessories in accordance with ergonomic standards.

Action: Ensure the procurement of all furniture and furniture accessories is acceptable.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Commitment: Further develop our accessibility in accommodation commitment to ministry staff through the development of a "practice ergonomics" tips sheet.

Action: Develop tip sheet and distribute hardcopy to all staff, as well as make it available on the Intranet and in an alternative format when required.

Timeframe: Completion expected October 2004.

Commitment: Continue to ensure new material posted on Internet website is in an accessible format.

Action: Accessibility-related review of all material to be posted on Internet.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Commitment: Procedures for how to respond to requests for accessible formats will be available on Intranet for staff.

Action: Continue to ensure ministry ODA Intranet page is updated and reflects current information.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Programs and Services

Commitment: Review ministry emergency procedures manual for consistency with the requirements of the ODA.

Action: Ministry will review manual and conduct audit of all ministry locations to ensure that there are procedures in place for people with disabilities.

Timeframe: Commencing Spring 2005 (mid April 2005).

Commitment: Continue to work with the Ontario Realty Corporation and building

management to ensure barriers identified in common areas are addressed and eliminated.

Action: Continue to meet regularly with building management.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Commitment: Update the ministry specific "employment accommodation for people with disabilities" operating policy with the development of a business planning checklist for accommodations and procurement purposes.

Action: Checklist will provide guidance for implementation of accommodation requests and for procurement purposes.

Timeframe: Commencing Fall 2004.

Commitment: All new job descriptions will be reviewed for language and content that respects people with disabilities.

Action: Human Resources will review any future job descriptions to ensure that the content is consistent with the requirements of the ODA.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment: All future job advertisements will be reviewed for language and content that respects people with disabilities.

Action: Human Resources will review any future job advertisements to ensure consistency with the requirements of the ODA.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment: Continue to ensure 100 percent of managers complete on-line ODA training.

Action: All new managers will obtain ODA on-line training.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing.

Practices

Commitment: Ensure ODA is communicated on a regular basis through quarterly business brochures sent to staff.

Action: Updates will be provided on a quarterly basis through the brochure and on the ministry Intranet.

Timeframe: Commencing fall 2004.

Commitment: Accessibility awareness will be built into staff orientation binders and orientation sessions for new employees.

Action: This component will be added to staff orientation binders for all new staff.

Timeframe: Completion expected winter 2004 (late November).

Commitment: Conduct an accessibility audit in all reception/public areas to identify communication and architectural barriers.

Action: In progress.

Timeframe: Completed initial internal review. Conducting full audit in fall 2004.

Rationale: Hiring consultant to complete audit report by end of November 2004.

Commitment: Conduct an employee survey to assess level of knowledge about accessibility issues.

Action: In progress.

Timeframe: Commencing fall 2004 (late September 2004).

Rationale: Questions developed; awaiting appropriate timing for release.

Commitment: Managers and supervisors are given guidance on having regard to accessibility in all procurement activities and will receive the procurement guidelines.

Action: In progress.

Timeframe: 2004-05

For more information

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

General inquiry number: 1-800 818-2900 or in Toronto 416-326-4483

TTY number: 1-800 387-5559

E-mail: write2us@energy.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship's Accessibility Ontario web portal at:

www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility. 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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