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Ministry of Energy 2013-2014 Annual Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

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

Recently, the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) established Ontario's roadmap to become accessible by 2025. It includes standards in areas such as: customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment. In 2010, the Ministry of Energy complied with the requirements of the first standard on [customer service](#).

In 2011, ministries began to meet the requirements of the other four standards found in the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#).

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

"The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure

accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities."

This Plan will build on these laws and the MYAP. It will outline how the Ministry of Energy will contribute to a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.

To access this and other ministries' 2013 – 14 Accessibility Plans, visit Ontario.ca.

Section One: Report on Measures Taken in 2012 – 13

Customer Service

The following is a list of the Customer Service commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will review any feedback received on accessibility related issues to ensure the ministry delivers goods and services to the public in a manner that takes their disability into consideration. The ministry's public-facing internet site will continue to offer the public multiple avenues to provide feedback, such as email, mail, phone and TTY. All feedback provided will be collected and analysed to identify trends. These will be reviewed to ensure appropriate action is taken and to make improvements for the future.

Measures Taken in 2012-13:

- ▶ The ministry continues to maintain a feedback mechanism which ensures accessibility related issues with services and communications products are identified and remedied. The ministry has not received any feedback to date. The Correspondence Unit received no feedback regarding accessibility or accessible formats in 2012-13. The email, mail, phone and TTY options for public feedback will continue to be available for 2013-14.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to ensure timely investigation of disruptions within Ministry of Energy occupied buildings and ensure notices are posted to alert the public about how they may access the disrupted service and any alternatives that may exist. The Ministry of Energy will work through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), the manager of government real estate assets, to ensure that disruption notices are posted in areas accessed by the public in a timely and accessible manner.

Measures Taken in 2012-13:

- ▶ The Ministry of Energy continues to include a process to identify, manage, and communicate disruptions to service in its Continuity of Operations Plan.

Commitment: The CAO, all ADMs and all Directors will participate in the Certificate of Assurance Process for AODA compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, as well as the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11, ensuring that their program areas are in full compliance.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- The ministry was in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, and other requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11, which was verified through the Certificate of Assurance process. However, this was completed by the CAO and ADMs; Directors did not participate in 2013. The Ministry of Energy will ensure Directors are included in the 2014 Certificate of Assurance process.

Commitment: The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will continue to provide extra time before disconnections of identified persons with medical equipment needing electricity (e.g. electric wheelchairs, oxygen machines).

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The OEB established standards for the quality of service to be provided to consumers by electricity and gas distributors. Under the Distribution System Code, extra time is allowed before disconnections of identified persons with medical equipment needing electricity. Distributors are prohibited from disconnecting a customer for non-payment until 60 days after the customer has received a disconnection notice, whereas disconnection of other cases is 10 days after the disconnection notice is received. This extended period applies to residential customers who have provided documentation from a physician confirming that disconnection poses a risk of significant effect

on the physical health of the customer, family members or persons residing with the customer.

Commitment: The new Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (OCEB) regulation that limits financial assistance to the first 3,000 kWh per month of electricity consumed will continue to provide an exemption that is available for accounts where a person living at the premises uses medical equipment that requires electricity and has been prescribed by a health practitioner. The timeframe for this commitment is ongoing to the end of the OCEB program.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The OCEB regulation that limits financial assistance to the first 3,000 kWh per month of electricity consumed provides an exemption that is available for accounts where a person living at the premises uses medical equipment that requires electricity and has been prescribed by a health practitioner. Agents that deliver the OCEB to consumers are required to have made provisions in their billing practices to allow them to administer these exemptions. The ministry has not received any reports of eligible customers being denied approval for a medical exemption.

Information and Communications

The following is a list of the Information and Communications commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will ensure that, upon request, accessible formats of documents posted to the public-facing internet site are made available. The offer to produce accessible formats upon request will be posted on all public-facing pages of the ministry's internet where ministry products are made available. The timeframe for this commitment is 2013.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ All documents posted to the public facing site are currently and will continue to be provided in accessible format. Alternate formats (audio, braille, large print, etc), are made available on request. In addition, every page on public websites provides a link to Ontario.ca information on accessibility.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with Publications Ontario (PO), sending them all Ministry of Energy related publications. Through Publications Ontario, Ministry of Energy files will be made available by request to the public and employees in various accessible formats, such as Braille, large font, and audio.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ As of July 2012, PO has a Service Level Agreement with the ministry for Warehousing, Distribution, Print on Demand and Other Services. This agreement addresses accessibility requirements for alternate format requests. It also outlines the roles, responsibilities and financial arrangements for the ministry to follow when PO advises that a request has been received. PO has not received an alternate format request for a Ministry of Energy document to date.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to require staff to incorporate accessibility considerations into the preparation of communication materials to ensure that these products are accessible to everyone. Staff will continue to be encouraged to watch training videos prepared by, or endorsed by, the OPS Diversity Office on topics such as preparing accessible documents. Service Management Branch will continue to provide communication to all staff regarding best practices when sending documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ All staff are now required to submit documents to be posted to the intranet site in accessible formats. Materials submitted in inaccessible formats are sent back to the program area with an explanation of ministry responsibilities to provide accessible formats and links to information on creating accessible documents.
- ▶ In July 2013, the Corporate Development Division established a series of corporate communications called "The 411". The 411 clearly indicates who the message is for, what each message is about and provides the message in an accessible format that can be read on Blackberry and assistive devices. There are three priority levels for the 411 messages: green notices are for best practices, tips or informational updates, orange notices are for a change in ministry directive or government policy and red notices are for urgent, time sensitive items, or items requiring follow up.

Commitment: The ministry's accessibility lead and the web services lead will work together to develop accessible versions of the ministry's templates. The timeframe for this commitment is 2013.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The leads reviewed ministry templates in 2013. All templates (slide decks, approval forms, briefing notes, etc) will be updated to accessible versions in 2014.

Commitment: The ministry's website is moving to Ontario.ca in April 2013 as part of the OneSite project. At that time, only limited/key/high-traffic web content will be moved and it must be accessible. All other web content will be removed at that time. The timeframe for this commitment is April 2013.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

Cabinet Office has amended timelines for moving website content to OneSite. The new schedule has Ministry of Energy priority content migration slated for January 2014 to July 2014. The remaining content is scheduled to be migrated from July 2014 to January 2015.

Employment Accommodations

The following is a list of the Employment Accommodation commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with the Regional Recruitment Centre to ensure that all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with the requirements of the ODA. Additionally, the ministry will commit to having accessible and barrier-free interview facilities. The option to have documents provided in accessible formats will also be made available.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The Ministry of Energy continued to work with the Regional Recruitment Centre to ensure that all new job descriptions and job advertisements were consistent with accessibility requirements.
- ▶ The Ministry of Energy ensured all interview facilities were fully accessible and barrier-free. Each candidate called for an interview was asked to identify any accommodation requirements.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to enhance managers' awareness of the ODA/AODA to improve ability to accommodate public/staff with disabilities. Although the Ministry of Energy provides some service to the public, the ministry's primary application of the AODA is focused on ensuring that employees have healthy, safe and accessible work places. Managers at the Ministry of Energy have been provided with information on the accommodation fund to ensure they are aware of how to access the fund for various accessibility and accommodation issues affecting staff. In addition, we will continue to provide links to relevant websites and training.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The Service Management Unit implemented a number of initiatives in 2012-13 to ensure a healthy, safe and accessible work place, including implementation of solutions from employee accommodation requests and ergonomic assessments. Examples include customization of workstations and seating, and acquisition of IT technology needed to address specific needs.
- ▶ Accessibility was included in Corporate Development Division Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Correspondence sent to all management staff with accessibility and inclusion performance commitments that could be included in their 2013/14 performance plans. All managers to include a performance commitment to promote a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace.

Commitment: The Legal Services Branch's Knowledge Management Committee and counsel plan to continue centralizing documents, templates, precedents and opinions on the Branch's portal where appropriate.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The portal is hosted on the Ministry of the Attorney General's Legal Services Division intranet site. Precedents and other legal documents to be shared with Legal Services Branch staff across the OPS are posted to the portal. Legal Services Branch at the Ministry of Energy will follow leadership from the Ministry of the Attorney General to continue working on this commitment.

Commitment: The Legal Services Branch plans to review the Branch's shared drives and consider alternative approaches to file storage, with the aim of increasing access and ease of search.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The committee has introduced a new structure for the Branch's shared drive to standardize the way electronic documents are kept. Transition to the new system is ongoing.

Commitment: Managers at the Ministry of Energy will be made aware of the new requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11, including the return to work process, communication supports and individual accommodation plans for their employees. The timeframe for this commitment is January 1, 2013.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ All staff were required to take the module "Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation in the OPS" from the Centre for Leadership and Learning. Once the additional IASR Training modules are released by the Diversity Office, managers will be required to complete them as well.

Built Environment

The following is a list of the Built Environment commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The ministry will continue to include accessible work environment best practices into each facility initiative to ensure individual needs are respected and wise investments in facility assets and equipment are made. These best practices will include integrating accessible office design guidelines, as well as accessibility and ergonomically supportive choices in products, furniture, fitting and finishes.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The ministry uses OPS vendors of record to acquire its furniture and fittings, ensuring that products which support accessibility are used each time. This includes choosing items with adjustable features, which can be reconfigured to suit individual needs.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with building management and accommodation service providers to ensure that accessibility design guidelines are applied to all ministry building projects. The Ministry of Energy is dedicated to ensuring that accessibility design guidelines are applied to accommodation projects and ongoing maintenance, common areas are kept free of obstacles, ergonomic furniture is procured, and special tools/equipment are obtained to meet the needs of people with disabilities. These matters will be addressed as requests for accommodations are made. We work with building management to ensure entranceway and emergency phones are accessible to people with disabilities.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The ministry ensures its accommodation service provider, Infrastructure Ontario, adheres to accessibility best practices and office design best practices in the delivery of its project services to the ministry, by making these requirements of the projects.
- ▶ We work with building management to ensure entranceway and emergency phones are accessible to people with disabilities.
- ▶ In 2013, the ministry collaborated with the OPS Diversity Office to conduct a review of architectural plans for a major relocation project. Outcomes of the collaboration included changes to designs which surpassed the government's minimum code requirements for accessibility.

Procurement

The following is a list of the Procurement commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will continue to consider accessibility when planning for procurement of goods and services and incorporate the requirements into the procurement process.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ Accessibility requirements are considered for all procurement projects during the development of the business case and the procurement documents.

Commitment: Procurement documents, where applicable, will specify the desired accessibility standards to be met

and provide guidelines for the evaluation of the proposals with respect to those standards.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ Any requirements for accessibility have been incorporated into the deliverables outlined in procurement documents.

Commitment: Guidelines and staff training will be provided as new Ministry of Government Services directives and/or policies are updated.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ Guidance has been provided to ministry staff regarding the requirements at the planning stage of the procurement process.

Commitment: Accessibility links and information for staff reference will continue to be available on the ministry's intranet site.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The ministry used the accessible version of the Request for Proposals document as provided by Supply Chain Management Division.

Other Commitments

The following is a list of the other commitments from the 2012-13 Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan. The timeline for the commitment is ongoing unless otherwise stated. Measures taken in 2012-13 are listed under each commitment.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will perform checks of offices and common areas, as part of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requirements to identify and address any impediments to the health and safety of employees, with consideration to the needs of people with disabilities. The Ministry of Energy's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) meets on a regular basis to discuss the safety needs and concerns of ministry staff. Accessibility guidelines are a priority of the committee, paying special attention to ensuring that the workplace is kept free of physical barriers and fully accessible. Examples include making sure that doorways are not blocked and that computer and network cables are tucked away neatly to prevent tripping.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ Regular inspections by the Joint Health and Safety Committee ensure that office areas, common areas, circulation paths and emergency equipment are maintained to standard or to best practice, and in working order. Where concerns have been identified, these have been addressed and rectified through the property management service provider.

Commitment: The Deputy Minister and all Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) have committed to mentoring staff in the Diversity Mentoring Program and all staff who self-identify as being part of one of the under-represented groups in senior levels can apply. This group includes staff with disabilities.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The combined Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Infrastructure Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program in 2012-13 had four ADMs participate. Although each ADM is committed to the program, there were not enough qualified employee partners to match. The Deputy Minister stream, coordinated by the Diversity Office, matched the Ministry of Energy Deputy Minister with an employee partner from another ministry.

Commitment: The Ministry of Energy will annually consider and address the needs of employees with disabilities when reviewing, testing and updating the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) by incorporating recommendations and advice from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs. The Ministry of Energy will review the COOP plan components, including response, evacuation, recovery and communications to ensure accessibility requirements have been taken into account for staff with disabilities. The ministry will continue to integrate the service disruption notice process into the Continuity of Operations Plan.

Measures Taken in 2012-13

- ▶ The ministry's COOP plan is continuously updated to ensure that emergency procedures are inclusive of all staff and that the ministry has a process to address specific needs where identified.

In 2013, the ministry launched a contact management system to all employees which will allow critical emergency

information to be conveyed in a variety of formats and delivery channels, to ensure each staff person has a variety of options to receive this information in a way that works for them.

Section Two: Report on Measures Planned for 2013 – 14

Last year, the OPS published a [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(MYAP\)](#) that outlines how the government will identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. In this section, we highlight the deliverables and timelines of the MYAP as well as the ministry proposed measures to reach these deliverables through to 2016. During the 2013 – 14 reporting period, the Ministry of Energy will only report on measures it will take or initiate during 2013 - 14.

Customer Service

MYAP Outcomes

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

2013 – MYAP Deliverables

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

2013 -14 – Proposed Measures

- ▶ Identify what accessible devices are available on site to people with disabilities and ensure that staff know how to use them
- ▶ Remind staff of accessible customer service requirements through green level 411 notification
- ▶ Ensure notice disruption policies are in place when services are unavailable
- ▶ Analyze feedback received

2014-16 – MYAP Deliverables

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

2014-2016 – Proposed Measures

- ▶ Ensure that the Diversity and Accessibility Lead takes the OPS Inclusion Lens train-the-trainer session
- ▶ Initiate a review of internal policies, procedures and practices to assure that accessibility is considered

Information and Communications

MYAP Outcomes

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

2013 – 14 – MYAP Deliverables

- ▶ Accessibility criteria built into decision-making, project management, procurement, technology, infrastructure, I & IT and training
- ▶ Accessibility Expo

2013 – 14 Proposed Measures

- ▶ Continue to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards
- ▶ Train webmasters on accessible websites and staff on web-ready documents
- ▶ Update all ministry templates (slide decks, approval forms, briefing notes, etc) to accessible versions
- ▶ Send a green level 411 message to remind all staff about best practices for creating accessible documents
- ▶ Communicate the availability of accessible formats and communication supports to the public by January 1, 2014
- ▶ Commit to sending at least one ministry delegate to Expo/JOIN conference in the Fall of 2013

2014 – 16 MYAP Deliverables

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

2014 – 16 Proposed Measures

- ▶ Update accessible format standards and templates based on best practices (e.g., braille e-mail address and TTY listing on business cards)
- ▶ Train staff about the protocols, hiring process, budget and account codes to accommodate alternate format and communication support requests
- ▶ Train staff about protocols to create accessible events
- ▶ Commit to sending at least one ministry delegate to future Expo/JOIN conferences

Employment Accommodations

MYAP Outcomes

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

2013 – 14 MYAP Deliverables

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

2013 – 14 Proposed Measures

- ▶ Increase awareness of employment accommodation directives, policies and plans with managers
- ▶ Follow-up with staff who have submitted an accommodation request to ensure appropriate measures taken
- ▶ Ensure the availability of accessible formats and communication supports for employees
- ▶ Support mentor/sponsor programs
- ▶ All management staff to include commitments to promote a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace in their performance plans

2014 – 16 MYAP Deliverables

- ▶ Best practices on employment accommodation and return to work implemented
- ▶ Better accommodation for employees with disabilities resulting from management review
- ▶ Managers and staff have accessibility performance commitments

2014 – 16 Proposed Measures

- ▶ Analyze Employee Survey results to assess potential barriers to employees with disabilities
- ▶ Develop protocols and procedures to implement recommendations resulting from 2013 management review

Built Environment

MYAP Outcomes

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

2013 – 14 MYAP Deliverables and Timelines – Government Facilities

- ▶ Continue to develop strategies for addressing infrastructure barriers

2013 -14 Proposed Measures – Government Facilities

Increase awareness of the OPS barrier-free requirements for government facilities

2014 – 16 MYAP Deliverables – Public Spaces

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

2014 – 16 Proposed Measures – Public Spaces

- ▶ The ministry will continue to work with enterprise partners to achieve OPS Built Environment goals

Leadership

MYAP Outcomes

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario

2013-14 MYAP Deliverables

- ▶ Ongoing consultations with persons with disabilities
- ▶ Ministries continue to publish annual accessibility plans

2013 – 14 Proposed Measures

- ▶ Develop strategies that will assist the ministry meet its IASR obligations in areas such as web accessibility, employee accommodation and procurement
- ▶ The 2013-14 Accessibility Plan will be published by December 3, 2013

2014 – 16 MYAP Deliverables

- ▶ Accessibility continues as strong organizational commitment

2014 – 16 Proposed Measures

The ministry will continue to work with enterprise partners to achieve OPS accessible leadership goals

Section Three: Report on Legislative Review

In support of the government's commitment to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, the OPS will continue to review legislation, regulation and policies, to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

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

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

This phase of the review will be completed by the end of 2014. The government has decided to review these statutes because it is anticipated that changes in these areas will have the highest impact on those Ontarians who have accessibility needs.

During 2012-13, there were no high impact statutes identified for the Ministry of Energy to review. However, if the next phase of the Legislative Review does identify statutes for the ministry to review, we will report on the progress of the review in future accessibility plans.

Glossary of Terms and/or Acronyms

AODA

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

ASCS

- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation

IASR

- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

MYAP

- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

OPS

- Ontario Public Service

ODA

- Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

PO

- Publications Ontario

TTY

- Telephone Typewriter or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf

WCAG

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

How to Contact us

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Energy’s accessibility plan are always welcome.

General inquiry number: 1-888-668-4636

TTY number: 1-800-239-4224

Ministry website address: www.energy.gov.on.ca

For email, please visit the Contact Us section of the ministry website.

Vist the [AccessOn](#) web portal found on the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment website. AccessOn promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

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

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

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