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Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change identified and removed barriers to accessibility 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

Ministries continue to make available to the public, as previously required under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#) (ODA), annual plans that identify how ministries will identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

Like all ministries, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) 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 the Environment and Climate Change's 2015 ODA Plan, celebrates the tenth anniversary of the AODA 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 in 2025.

The ministry remains committed to inclusion and accessibility through continued compliance, establishment of accessibility initiatives and applying the OPS accessibility principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity to our day to day activities, creating an accessible environment which benefits everyone.

The ministry's accessibility achievements are a result of dedicated employees who demonstrate and embed accessibility into everything they do and support an inclusive environment through their awareness of diversity, accessibility and inclusion. In addition, all staff receive the necessary training to better understand their rights and obligations under the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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.

Measures taken by MOECC in 2015

MOECC is committed to providing quality, timely and accessible services to our staff and the public we serve.

As an example, the ministry's websites provide visitors to the site the active offer to provide information in alternate formats upon request. The ministry's public information centre's dedicated staff are ready to respond to alternate format requests within the same delivery timeframes established in the OPS Common Service Standards.

The [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and best practices form the cornerstone to our continued responsibilities under the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation*.

- Investigate expanding ministry's existing TeleTYpe technology to desktop software. This software

enables multiple users to type messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening, replacing the current TeleTYpe technology hardware devices.

- The ministry has determined that the existing TeleTYpe system is adequate based on low annual usage.
- Staff in our public information centre and spills action centre are trained in TeleTYpe use and are prepared to respond to incoming calls.
- The ministry will continue to promote and track e-training for MOECC staff including:
 - May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities
 - May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know about Accessible Customer Service
 - Mission Possible: It's Your Call: Using a TeleTYpe technology and the Bell Relay System to communicate with someone who is Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing
 - Mission Possible: Your Turn to Lead: Guiding a person who has a dog guide or white cane
 - Mission Possible: Interpreters, Intervenors, Attendants, Oh My! Interacting with someone when a support person is present
 - Staff across the ministry are encouraged to take training to encourage professional and personal growth and awareness.
 - Outreach campaigns posted on the ministry's intranet site such as the Accessibility Tips campaign, Diversity and Inclusion BINGO, and feature articles (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disabilities) all of which identify learning resources available to staff.
 - Providing staff with a listing of available accessibility training and incorporating the training into employee performance learning and development plans.
 - Introducing new staff, interns and students to the courses through branch orientation and onboarding processes.
 - Tracking training through employee performance learning and development plan appraisals and with the use of online tools such as LearnON (the OPS' online training portal).
- Promote the use of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Associations Guide to Conducting Accessible Meetings and Guide to Accessible Public Engagement to staff encouraging its use both for internal and external meetings.
 - Ministry staff take accessibility into consideration when planning meetings through the use of the guides and checklists which include accessibility considerations (e.g. venue selection, providing materials in advance, scheduling, seating arrangements, provision of alternate formats including videos and transcripts of the events, etc.) and including an active offer to provide accommodation.
 - The guides were promoted through an annual email reminder sent to all staff.

- Promote accessibility programs and initiatives including the Days of Significance Program, Accessibility at Source and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change Accessibility Tips Campaign.
 - Accessibility programs and initiatives are posted on the ministry's intranet site, through email, and at education and outreach sessions facilitated by the ministry's accessibility, diversity and inclusion champions.
 - Review and discussion of the programs is encouraged at management and staff meetings.
 - New initiatives including Diversity BINGO, an interactive learning tool which features accessibility was launched.
 - Multicultural calendars which celebrate diversity and include United Nations Days were distributed and displayed across the ministry.
 - Days of significance articles celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the 10th anniversary of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* National Disability Employment Awareness Month were posted on the ministry's intranet site and through email.

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 taken by MOECC in 2015

In 2015, the ministry made great strides towards making our websites and web content accessible. A ministry-wide digital accessibility working team was established to evaluate, modify and develop websites and web content on those sites which are accessible. New processes, standards, best practices and quality controls were developed to achieve accessibility compliance for website content. Three ministry public facing applications were made AODA compliant, which include Brownfields Environmental Site Registry, Water Taking Reporting System, and AirQuality.

- Deliver a training program for ministry staff on creating accessible documents (e.g. reports, guidance materials, brochures, etc.) and providing communications supports.
 - Providing staff with necessary software to create and test accessibility of documents.
 - Developing, distribution and promotion of accessibility guides, checklists, and training on a variety of software applications available to staff on creating accessible documents.
 - Encouraging staff to include accessible document training into employee performance learning and development plans.

- Developing and hosting online employee networks such as the 'Accessibility in Action' group.
- Hosting guest speakers on the topic of accessible documents in staff meetings.
- Developing a digital accessibility strategy to meet compliance requirements under the AODA for all ministry internet sites including the Environmental Registry.
- The ministry will continue to promote and track e-training for MOECC staff including:
 - The Integrated Accessibility Standards, *Ontario Regulation 191/11* Information and Communications Standards
 - Mission Possible: A Word about WORD: Making Microsoft WORD Documents accessible
 - Mission Possible: Turning the Page: Making Portable Document Format documents accessible
 - Mission Possible: Connecting the Dots: How to prepare documents for Braille transcription
 - Plain Language Online
 - staff across the ministry are encouraged to take training to encourage professional and personal growth and awareness.
 - outreach campaigns posted on the ministry's intranet site such as the Accessibility Tips campaign, Diversity and Inclusion BINGO, and feature articles (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disabilities) all of which identify learning resources available to staff.
 - providing staff with a listing of accessibility training available and incorporating the training into employee performance learning and development plans.
 - introducing new staff, interns and students to the courses through branch orientation and onboarding processes.
- Tracking training through employee performance learning and development plan appraisals and with the use of online tools such as LearnON (the OPS' online training portal). Promote and leverage the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and Ontario Public Service programs and initiatives, such as the Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence and Accessibility at Source initiative.
 - Accessibility at Source posters are displayed in offices across the ministry to raise awareness.
 - Default settings on Microsoft WORD and Outlook across the ministry were changed to encourage accessibility of communications.
 - Program areas work with the ministry's Communications Branch to ensure that all ministry documents posted to Ontario.ca are accessible.
 - Branches worked with the Accessibility Centre of Excellence in developing the Chief Drinking Water Inspector Annual Report 2014-2015 and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate

Change: Minister's Annual Report on Drinking Water 2015, which are posted on Ontario.ca in [HTML](#) format.

- Reports are written using a balance of plain and technical language and complex data was moved to the Open Data catalogue to make information easier to access and understand for everyone.
- Programs were streamlined and reduced the number of forms by reviewing and evaluating them for accessibility.
- Developed an accessible interactive Source Water Protection Map which is available on Ontario.ca.

Employment

[MYAP](#) key outcome

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

Measures taken by [MOECC](#) in 2015

- Showcase intranet articles featuring employees with disabilities and their perspectives.
 - The Deputy Minister's blog on the ministry's intranet featured a variety of guest contributors including feature articles on the Parapan AM Games and the importance of talking about disabilities.
- The ministry will continue to use the Ontario Public Service Executive Recruitment Inclusion Lens tool and the Barrier-Free Guides for recruitment, which include how to write barrier-free employment ads, prevent barriers in application screening, and removing barriers from the recruitment selection process.
 - Managers were provided with resources and self-assessment tools to become more aware of personal hidden biases.
 - The [OPS](#) Inclusion lens was applied to the recruitment process.
 - Guidelines for fair hiring practices are highlighted twice annually through all staff emails.
 - [HR](#) advisory and recruitment services and tools are used to ensure barrier-free, fair and transparent recruitment.
 - All recruitment candidates are offered accessibility accommodations throughout the recruitment process including during interviews.
- Promote and track e-learning for [MOECC](#) staff including:
 - Integrated Accessibility Standards, *Ontario Regulation 191/11* Employment Standards
 - Diversity - Inclusive Leadership: Leading Diversity

- Ontario Public Service Recruitment Process
- Staff across the ministry are encouraged to take training to encourage professional and personal growth and awareness.
- Outreach campaigns posted on the ministry's intranet site such as the Accessibility Tips campaign, Diversity and Inclusion BINGO, and feature articles (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disabilities) all of which identify learning resources available to staff.
- Providing staff with a listing of accessibility training available and incorporating the training into employee performance learning and development plans.
- Introducing new staff, interns and students to the courses through branch orientation and onboarding processes.
- Tracking training through employee performance learning and development plan appraisals and with the use of online tools such as LearnON (the OPS' online training portal).
- Promote the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and Ontario Public Service programs and initiatives, such as the Ontario Public Service Employee Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy and Accessibility at Source.
 - Fostered a supportive work environment that supports employment accommodation.
 - Accommodation and return to work plans were developed by managers in consultation with Disability Advisors and employees.
 - Twice annual reminders were sent to all managers regarding the OPS Employee Accommodation and Return to Work Policy.
 - The new Disability Accommodation Policy and mandatory e-learning courses: Disability Accommodation, and Supporting and Managing Attendance was communicated to managers and promoted at divisional management team meetings.
- Promote the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change one-window approach on employment accommodation to managers.
 - The Centre for Health, Safety and Wellness disability advisors provided training sessions to managers to identify the roles and responsibilities and provide resources.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOECC in 2015

The ministry continues to reduce its environmental footprint and create barrier-free workplaces across its many locations making our spaces more accessible for everyone.

- Track and promote Integrated Accessibility Standards, *Ontario Regulation 191/11* Built Environment e-learning training for MOECC staff.
 - Managers and staff were informed of the implementation of the Design of Public Spaces standard under the IASR that took effect on January 1, 2015 and encouraged to take the available training.
 - This training was made mandatory for the ministry's facilities management team and completion of the training was tracked.
 - Staff across the ministry are encouraged to take training to encourage professional and personal growth and awareness.
 - Outreach campaigns posted on the ministry's intranet site such as the Accessibility Tips campaign, Diversity and Inclusion BINGO, and feature articles (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disabilities) all of which identify learning resources available to staff.
 - Providing staff with a listing of accessibility training available and incorporating the training into employee performance learning and development plans.
 - Introducing new staff, interns and students to the courses through branch orientation and onboarding processes.
 - Tracking training through employee performance learning and development plan appraisals and with the use of online tools such as LearnON (the OPS' online training portal).
- The ministry will continue to promote the Guidelines for Barrier Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.
 - Ministry staff take accessibility into consideration when planning meetings through the use of the guides and checklists which include accessibility considerations (e.g. location, providing materials in advance, scheduling, etc.) and including an active offer to provide accommodation.
 - The guides were promoted through an annual email reminder sent to all staff.
- Work with building leads, landlords and Infrastructure Ontario to maintain and improve upon accessibility features.
 - Managers participated in building committee meetings to discuss and address and accessibility requirements.
 - Program areas worked with the facilities management team and Infrastructure Ontario regularly to maintain, improve upon and address barriers to accessibility across the ministry's facilities.

General outcomes

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.

Measures taken by MOECC in 2015

- The ministry will continue to promote the use of the Ontario Public Service Inclusion Lens.
 - The ministry's Diversity and Inclusion Lead promoted the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens in education and outreach sessions to staff and senior management.
 - Diversity BINGO, an interactive inclusion learning tool was developed and made available through the outreach sessions and on the ministry's intranet site which highlights and promotes the use of the lens.
 - The OPS Inclusion Lens was applied in the development of large scale events including the Communicating for Compliance: Insights from the UK seminar which involved over 330 participants.
 - Promote and track e-learning for MOECC staff including:
 - Diversity – Using the Ontario Public Service Inclusion Lens
 - Diversity – Differences Matter: Diversity Foundations
 - The Integrated Accessibility Standards, *Ontario Regulation 191/11* in the Ontario Public Service
 - Let's Start with Words
 - Working Together: The Ontario Human Rights Code and *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
 - Preparing Procurement Documents
 - Fundamentals of Procurement: Buying with Confidence
 - Staff across the ministry are encouraged to take training to encourage professional and personal growth and awareness.
 - Outreach campaigns posted on the ministry's intranet site such as the Accessibility Tips campaign, Diversity and Inclusion BINGO, and feature articles (e.g. International Day of Persons with Disabilities) all of which identify learning resources available to staff.
 - Providing staff with a listing of accessibility training available and incorporating the training into employee performance learning and development plans.
 - Introducing new staff, interns and students to the courses through branch orientation and onboarding processes.
 - Tracking training through employee performance learning and development plan appraisals and with the use of online tools such as LearnON (the OPS' online training portal).

- Engage management and staff to lead accessibility initiatives to encourage discussions at ground level.
 - Branches across the ministry encourage discussion on inclusion and accessibility through diversity and inclusion themed potluck lunches.
 - Staff are encouraged to share knowledge and advice on accessibility such as alternate formats, creating accessible documents, etc.
- Promote and support employee participation in accessibility networks including the Disability Advisory Council and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change Accessibility Working Group.
 - Staff are encouraged to participate and become a part of networks.
 - Staff recognition, support and encouragement for participation in employee networks and initiatives.
- Promote and support participation of employees with disabilities as both mentors and mentees in the Diversity Mentoring Program.
 - The Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program was actively promoted to all staff before and throughout the 2015-2016 application period. The Deputy Minister sent out a communication announcing the launch of the program and encouraged staff and senior management participation. In addition, the Diversity, Accessibility & Inclusion intranet site was updated on a regular basis to further promote the program.
- Encourage and support participation in accessibility conferences, workshops and volunteer opportunities.
 - Staff were encouraged to attend the MaRS Accessibility Innovation Showcase that took place from August 8 – 10, 2015. A latest news article was published on the ministry's intranet site to talk about the importance of the event.
- Promote the ministry's Accessibility Plan and Inclusion Plans and challenge staff to incorporate the '10 things you can do now.'
 - Accessibility and Inclusion Plans were shared with staff through email and on the ministry's intranet site.
 - Excerpts of the plans including the "10 things you can do now" were posted in common areas and included in presentations to encourage staff to take action.
 - Resources, tools and tips included in the Inclusion Plan are used to demonstrate practical application of inclusion based values in daily work.
- Encourage staff to include accessibility training, workshops, awareness sessions and employee-led initiatives in their annual learning plans.
 - Managers and staff are encouraged to take accessibility training, workshops and awareness sessions through discussions when reviewing performance development plans, as part of

onboarding processes.

- Accessibility requirements are considered throughout the procurement process with the aid of checklists, best practices, processes, guides and the OPS Inclusion Lens.
- Results of the OPS Employee Engagement Survey were shared with staff through meetings, Director led discussions, internal newsletters, email and intranet articles. Staff further engaged in open dialogue sessions to discuss next steps and opportunities for improvement and to seek feedback and suggestions on how to address findings.

Section two: report on measures proposed by the ministry for 2016

Customer service

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MOECC for 2016

The ministry is committed to providing accessible quality services in a timely manner to OPS customers.

The OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy will remain the cornerstone of our service delivery.

The ministry will continue to:

- encourage staff to take advantage of the accessibility educational programs available, to apply their learning to their everyday work, and to become ambassadors of accessibility by sharing their knowledge
- promote events, courses, training sessions, new tools and provide updates on the ministry's accessibility intranet site and through other communications vehicles including email, meetings, blogs, outreach sessions, etc.
- embed best practices into new and existing business processes
- monitor, assess, and track feedback and data from staff and OPS customers to inform our accessibility program

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 MOECC for 2016

The ministry is committed to providing accessible information and communications to OPS staff and customers.

The ministry will continue to:

- assess, monitor and update our websites and web applications and content on those sites to compliance standards set out in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*
- provide staff with training, tools and templates to enable them to create accessible documents and websites
- embed digital accessibility standards into new and existing business processes.
- consider software upgrades as required to enable accessibility at the source
- foster collaborations with the I&IT Accessibility of Excellence, the OPS Diversity Office and other ministries to leverage knowledge

Employment

MYAP key outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures proposed by MOECC for 2016

The ministry will continue to foster full and meaningful participation of OPS employees with disabilities in their employment.

The ministry will continue to:

- apply the Ontario Public Service Executive Recruitment Lens and Barrier-Free Guides for recruitment to foster an inclusive recruitment process
- promote learning opportunities and resources available to staff as reminders and as new information is developed
- solicit feedback from staff on their experiences in relation to accessibility to inform the accessibility program
- provide management training opportunities for understanding unconscious biases to foster better management of addressing accessibility and inclusion in the workplace

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MOECC for 2016

The ministry is committed to improving accessibility at our OPS facilities across the province.

The ministry will continue to:

- look for opportunities to improve our workplaces so that they are more accessible
- apply the Guidelines for Barrier Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities when constructing, relocating, retrofitting ministry workplaces
- use feedback provided from employees, landlords and Infrastructure Ontario to inform facilities projects

General outcomes

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.

Measures proposed by MOECC for 2016

The ministry remains steadfast in our commitment to continuous improvement through the identification of barriers to accessibility and diligence to removing and preventing them on a continuing basis.

The ministry will continue to:

- share the accessibility plan with staff and encourage open and meaningful discussion around accessibility.
- provide and track accessibility training to staff and promote accessibility awareness through workshops and other training
- encourage participation in the Diversity Mentorship Program
- celebrate Days of Significance and encourage staff to share their personal stories related to accessibility

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

Introduction

The ministry's accessibility plan includes the measures in place to address the identification, removal and

prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the Acts, regulations, policies, programs and services administered by the ministry.

Our ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities.

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:

MOECC continues to apply the OPS Accessibility Review Tool and Inclusion Lens, including the Accessible Legislation Worksheet, to identify potential accessibility barriers in:

- proposals for acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on persons with disabilities
- existing legislation, to ensure that accessibility is considered

Actions taken in the past year

In 2015, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change took the following actions to address barriers in its Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services in response to identified barriers:

- an amendment was made to *subsection 5(4) of O. Reg. 227/07* made under the *Environmental Protection Act* to include "disability" among a list of grounds for a document not being deemed to be effectively served on a person. The other grounds are: absence; accident; illness; or, other causes beyond the person's control.

Upcoming plans for review

In the coming year, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will continue to apply the measures currently in place to review the Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and/or services, created to support the implementation of ministry programs to avoid barriers to persons with disabilities.

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Ontario is the first Canadian Province to pass a law to improve accessibility in the areas that impact the daily lives of people with disabilities.

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