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Ministry of Finance 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of Finance identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2015 and future accessibility commitments for 2016.

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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 Finance (MOF) 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 entitled [Accessibility in the Ontario Public Service: Leading the Way Forward](#).

The Ministry of Finance'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 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as we continue on our path to an accessible Ontario in 2025.

Section one: report on measures taken by MOF 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 MOF in 2015

- As of November 2015, almost 100 per cent of the ministry's staff have completed the mandatory IASR courses. These courses provide staff members with information on their role in providing accessible customer service, information and communications. Managers continue to follow up with staff members who have not completed the mandatory training requirements.
- The ministry continued to raise awareness on accessible procurement at the Financial Practices Forum.
- The ministry's emergency procedure, which outlines the need to accommodate staff and visitors with disabilities in the event of an emergency, was shared internally with staff.
- The ministry continued to provide assistance to managers in developing and implementing individualized workplace emergency response plans for their staff with disabilities, in accordance with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide. In this plan, managers can document any accommodations required for the Emergency Information and Reporting Hotline.
- The ministry continued to engage employees in inclusion-related discussions and learning through a variety of events and initiatives coordinated by the Ministry's Inclusion Committee.
- A subset of the MOF Inclusion Committee was formed to focus on creating greater awareness of the OPS Inclusion Lens in MOF and seeking out opportunities for application to ministry programs, policies and/or services. A workplan for the subcommittee is under development.
- MOF Inclusion Committee members completed the OPS Inclusion Lens course and the learnings have been communicated internally.

The ministry communicated the revised OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy to staff. In addition, the ministry updated its accessible communications resources to reflect the changes to the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy.

- The ministry's Tax and Benefits Administration regional offices and the Tax Information Office in Oshawa have updated their signage in order to comply with the AODA and built standards regulations. Resulting in additional accessible customer service for individuals and staff with disabilities. The updated bilingual signage uses universal graphic symbols, sharp contrast, raised tactile lettering and grade 1 Braille.
- Since 2010, the ministry has had an accessible feedback process in place to respond to inquiries and suggestions from the public. [The ministry can be contacted by mail, e-mail, and telephone \(including TTY\).](#)
- Virtual pre-budget consultations allowed citizens, who may have had difficulty attending public events, to participate online. By providing an option for online participation in the budget consultation process, the ministry displayed its commitment to active accommodation.
- The ministry continued to provide additional training on accessible formats and communication to support accessible customer service. This training was made available to employees by request.
- MOF maintains active participation on the OPS Disability Advisory Council. This DM-appointed MOF employee attends MOF Inclusion Committee to offer support around accommodation and accessibility initiatives in the ministry.

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 MOF in 2015

- The ministry continued work towards meeting web content responsibilities as per the requirements for compliance with the IASR for 2016. The workplan to achieve compliance includes efforts focussed on I&IT architectural governance, inclusion in I&IT procurement processes and IT project management quality control.
- Content on the ministry's public website continued to meet accessibility standards for people with low vision or vision impairments, and is readable by screen reading devices. The 'html' format includes a navigable heading structure, table structure and appropriate alternative text descriptions for images. As per the implementation schedule, 2012 to current content is provided at the WCAG 2.0 AA standard. Pre 2012 content is provided in an accessible format (html or accessible pdf).
- Information and resources posted to the MOF intranet and internet site were reviewed by

Communications Services Branch using various accessibility checker tools. Testing of the public website has been completed using the recommended tools and sample sizes based on the highest traffic pages on the site. The most recent remediated sample of the site has been posted to the OPSpedia websites database. Additional samples continue to be tested from the site using this approach with the intention of testing the whole site over the next year. Preliminary testing on a sample of the main Intranet site was done but a plan for systematically testing the entire site is not yet completed. Over the past year and through the current year, the ministry will continue to identify a complete set of ministry intranet assets and collaborate with divisional owners in order to test and remediate these sites per the IASR schedule. The move to Insite is part of ministry efforts in this area as much of this content is expected to migrate by 2020.

- The ministry will continue to monitor the web accessibility implementation schedule to ensure internet and intranet compliance with the standard as outlined in the IASR.
- For sites that meet the standard, the ministry will continue to review changes to maintain compliance to standard. A process for continuous monitoring of new web content has been developed to ensure compliance.
- The ministry's accessible formats guide was provided to all employees through MOF's intranet site and reflects the current process for arranging alternate formats.
- Additional ministry-specific training on accessible formats and communications were developed and continued to be provided to program areas to support staff learning on creating accessible documents. Training sessions and resources are available to support staff.
- All divisions in the ministry have attested to compliance with the IASR requirement to provide accessible formats and communication supports as part of the 2015 Certificate of Assurance attestation process.
- Accessibility considerations have been integrated into pre-budget consultations. These include:
 - all invitations to public events included a statement offering to accommodate persons with disabilities: "Please advise when you register if you require any accommodation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act."
 - sign language interpreters were arranged for the Toronto pre-budget consultation.
 - seating arrangements were arranged to allow for easier mobility by persons with disabilities.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOF in 2015

The ministry continued to offer accommodations for employees with disabilities, with the support of the Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness.

- All divisions in the ministry attested to compliance with the IASR requirement to arrange for documented employee accommodation plans when needed as part of the 2015 AODA attestation process.
- All MOF executive recruitment was completed through the Centre for Leadership and Learning which uses the OPS Executive Recruitment Lens for all senior executive recruitment.
- The OPS Recruitment Centre provided managers with resources on barrier-free recruitment. In addition, the following statement was included in all Ministry of Finance job advertisements: "The Ontario Public Service is an inclusive employer. Accommodation is available under the Ontario Human Rights Code."
- The ministry promoted continuous learning on diversity, inclusion and accessibility. For example, the "May I Help You" e-learning course is mandatory for all employees. In addition, the MOF Inclusion Committee coordinated a number of learning activities for employees through the year, including sessions on accessibility-related topics
- The ministry continued to offer alternative accessible versions of online training courses. MEDEI's Accessibility Innovation Showcase and the JOIN Conference were promoted within the ministry. A member of the MOF Inclusion Committee attended an Accessibility Conference held at the University of Guelph in May 2015.
- The expectation of mandatory inclusion commitments in senior managers' performance plans and suggested inclusion commitments were communicated by the Deputy Minister to MOF senior managers in March 2015.
- A standard template for a documented individual accommodation plan was shared through the 2015 AODA Attestation process.
- The Ministry of Finance continued to provide assistance to managers in developing and implementing individualized workplace emergency response plans for their staff with disabilities, in accordance with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide.
- Managers were reminded to share the appropriate information in these plans with the site-specific Emergency Building Lead, with the employee's consent.
- Emergency Building Leads developed site-specific emergency procedures, including designated waiting areas and a buddy system (volunteers) to assist those unable to evacuate on their own.
- Ministry leaders were encouraged to participate as mentors in the 2015-16 Inclusion Mentoring Program in order to increase their cultural competencies and awareness of bias. A key objective of the program is to support the learning of the 45 volunteer executives in their efforts to build a more inclusive workplace, which includes accommodating staff.

- MOF maintained active participation on the OPS Disability Advisory Council. This DM-appointed MOF employee attended MOF Inclusion Committee to offer support around accommodation and accessibility initiatives in the ministry.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOF in 2015

- The ministry attested to compliance with the 2015 IASR requirement for the design of public spaces and the updated barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code (OBC). All redesigns were consistent with the accessibility requirements under the Built Environment Standards reflected in the OPS Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. Examples of this include:
 - entrances received power door actuators with multi-level controls.
 - corridor widths were increased for easier mobility.
 - barrier-free fixtures were used in new washrooms and kitchenettes.
 - boardrooms and common use spaces were intentionally located in common corridors to allow for easier access by employees.
- The ministry's Tax and Benefits Administration regional offices and the Tax Information Office in Oshawa updated signage to comply with the AODA and Built Environment Standards regulations, resulting in additional accessible customer service for individuals and staff with disabilities. The updated bilingual signage uses universal graphic symbols, sharp contrast, raised tactile lettering and grade 1 Braille.
- Training and information sessions were held across the ministry with staff impacted by the 2015 IASR (MOF health & safety representatives, walk-in office managers, frequent requesters of facilities services assistance, etc.)
- The ministry continues to work diligently with service providers, Infrastructure Ontario and building management to remove and prevent built environment barriers.

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 MOF in 2015

- The ministry continued to strengthen the links between inclusion, mental health and accessibility in an effort to create a more inclusive organization. The Ministry's Inclusion Plan 2014-2017 continues to be implemented through a variety of initiatives and activities, many of which are focussed on supporting the ministry to be an organization that is accessible and healthy for employees and clients.
- As highlighted in the Information and Communications section, the ministry continued to integrate accessibility and accommodation considerations into pre-budget consultations.
- The ministry developed a mental health campaign to address mental health in the workplace. In 2015:
 - three mental health learning sessions were held for staff and managers.
 - the ministry identified a champion for mental health who works closely with the ministry's inclusion team.
 - the ministry has representation on the OPS Mental Health Project Development Team.
- All divisions in the ministry attested to compliance with the accessibility requirements for procurement in the 2015 Certificate of Assurance process.
- The ministry continued to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities, except where it is not practicable. If it is not practicable, an explanation is documented in the procurement file.
- The ministry continued to actively offer accommodations to all vendors with disabilities, upon request, to ensure that the RFP process itself does not create barriers for vendors with disabilities.
- The ministry continued to include the standard accessibility language which has been provided by Supply Chain Management on their website, under Tools and Templates – Accessibility.
- The ministry continued to recognize excellence in inclusion and accessibility as part of its internal employee awards.

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 MOF for 2016

- The ministry will continue to ensure that new employees are trained on IASR and requirements

under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

- An education session on accessibility considerations and documentation associated with procurement will be presented at a ministry forum, such as the Financial Practices Forum.
- Procedures will be in place to enhance the safety of a visitor with a disability during an evacuation of ministry facilities.
- The ministry will continue to engage employees in dialogue and to solicit client feedback on accessibility improvements and solutions.
- Staff will be encouraged to take the OPS Inclusion Lens e-learning course.
- New applications of the OPS Inclusion Lens will be identified to ensure that it is used as a tool in core decision-making processes and the development of new programs, policies and initiatives.
- The ministry will continue to provide clients, stakeholders and members of the public with disabilities an equitable and effective customer service experience that accommodates their needs.
- The ministry will continue to have a representative on the Disability Advisory Council. This representative will continue to offer support to the ministry in determining the best ways to communicate with Ontarians with disabilities.

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 MOF for 2016

- The ministry will continue to meet web content requirements as per the IASR through I&IT architectural governance, inclusion in I&IT procurement processes and IT project management quality control.
- The ministry will continue to monitor the web accessibility implementation schedule to ensure internet and intranet compliance with the standard as outlined in the IASR.
- For sites that meet the standard, the ministry will continue to review changes to maintain compliance to standard.
- The ministry will continue to partner with the OPS Diversity Office and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to support provincial ministry involvement in accessibility expos and forums.
- The ministry will encourage staff to enhance their knowledge of accessible documents and communications, in order to create more accessible products and services. The ministry will support this learning by promoting resources on how to create accessible documents and communications.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MOF for 2016

- The ministry will continue to ensure that accommodation for persons with disabilities is offered and provided as required and will continue to strive towards a barrier-free recruitment process. The ministry will provide staff and managers with resources on accommodations and recruitment.
- Communications will be developed and shared with staff to help them to understand accessibility best practices in customer service and the workplace.
- MOF senior managers will continue to include inclusion commitments in performance plans.
- The ministry will continue to engage partners in the OPS HR Community to enable greater awareness of employment accommodation directives, policies, plans and best practices (e.g. new Disabilities Accommodation Specialist).
- Ministry managers will be encouraged to participate as volunteer mentors in the 2016-17 Inclusion Mentoring Program in order to increase their culture competencies and awareness of bias. This learning will support managers in their efforts to accommodate staff.
- Divisions will be encouraged to review the results of Employee Engagement (or related) surveys to identify any barriers to inclusion, and to take actions to address these barriers.
- The ministry will continue to have a representative on the Disability Advisory Council. This representative will continue to play an important role in determining how the ministry supports its staff with disabilities.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MOF for 2016

- The ministry will ensure that all office locations comply with accessibility requirements under the Built Environment Standards reflected in the OPS Guidelines for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities
- The ministry will make every effort to ensure that redesigns are made with the least disruption possible to the public we serve while maintaining the security of our staff and operations. In

redesigning space, the ministry will use a common design, inclusive of accessibility needs and features, making space more open and accessible to employees.

- The ministry will continue to replace existing signage, as required, with accessible bilingual signage that has universal graphic symbols, sharp contrast, raised tactile lettering and grade 1 Braille.

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 MOF for 2016

- The ministry will continue to strengthen the links between inclusion, mental health and accessibility in an effort to create a more inclusive organization.
- The ministry will continue to develop strategies that help build an organization that is accessible and healthy for employees and clients. These will include strategies on mental health, diversity and accessibility.
- The ministry will continue to make an active offer to accommodate persons with disabilities at public events such as pre-budget consultations.
- The ministry will continue to meet accessibility standards in procurement.

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

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 persons 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 the statutes administered by MOF to have a high impact on persons with disabilities. This resulted in one statute, the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act* being targeted. This review has now been completed.

MOF remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities. MOF will continue to report through its 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 MOF's approach to carry out this work.

Measures currently in place

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, MOF will continue to consult and collaborate with the Ministry of the Attorney General to review government initiatives, including acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services for the purposes of identifying and removing barriers.

Actions taken in the past year

The Ministry of Finance recognizes the importance of addressing accessibility barriers in laws that have a high impact on members of the public and persons with disabilities. MOF continues to work with OPS legislative partners regarding the review of high impact legislation through the:

- Development of a standardized process and tools for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers;
- Review of statutes administered by MOF that meet the following criteria:
 - Statutes that affect persons with disabilities directly;
 - Statutes that provide for the delivery of widely applicable services or programs;
 - Statutes that provide benefits or protections; or
 - Statutes that affect a democratic or civic right or duty; and
- Review procedural rules, policies and guidelines for select high-impact legislation, where necessary.

The *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act* was identified as a high impact statute to be reviewed because it is anticipated that changes in this area will have the highest impact on those Ontarians who have accessibility needs. The review process used the OPS Inclusion Lens to help identify barriers to persons with disabilities.

Through the review process of the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act*, potential barriers and mitigating strategies were identified. This information was provided to MAG and MGCS, in an effort to coordinate pursuant actions.

Upcoming plans for review

As a result of the review of the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act*, MOF drafted legislated amendments to remove barriers in the legislation. In addition, MOF has completed approximately two-thirds of the review of statutes administered by MOF.

In 2016, MOF will continue to review its statutes and make the appropriate recommendations to the Ministry of the Attorney General. MOF, with other OPS legislative partners, will attend the Legislative Counsel regarding the MOF portion of the omnibus legislation, an amendment particular to making the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act* more accessible.

Recommended Sidebar Links

Multi-year accessibility plan for the Ontario Public Service

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

[Services and supports for people with developmental disabilities](#)

[How to make websites accessible](#)

Glossary of Terms and/or Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

ASCS – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation

CAC – Central Agencies Cluster

DAC – Disability Advisory Council

DMPP – Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program

EA – Employment Accommodation

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

I&IT – Information and Infrastructure Technology

IO – Infrastructure Ontario

JOIN – Job Opportunities Information Network

MOF – Ministry of Finance

MYAP – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

OBC – Ontario Building Code

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

OPS – Ontario Public Service

OHRC – Ontario Human Rights Code

TTY – Telephone Typewriter or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf

WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

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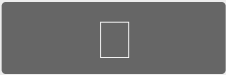
An accessible Ontario by 2025

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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