

MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

*2004-2005
Accessibility Plan*



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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 Training, Colleges and Universities. 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.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister



The Ontario government is working to build strong and liveable communities that offer a high quality of life for Ontarians of all abilities. In order to achieve this goal, we plan to introduce, this fall, measures to make the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) strong and effective.

Our government will work in partnership with Ontarians to make implementation of this legislation more responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.

At the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, we share the goal of providing more opportunities for all Ontarians. We work every day to ensure that everyone can access the education and training programs that allow them to participate fully in our society.

This plan outlines our commitment that people with disabilities will have access to the postsecondary education and training programs and services provided by the ministry. For example, our Literacy and Basic Skills program has an on-line service for deaf learners. Where possible, information on our website, our regional facilities and where we meet with stakeholders are accessible to all. TTY lines are available in many locations throughout the ministry to ensure people can access our services.

Our plan also outlines how we will continue to lead by example and build on our successes and achievements to further extend these services in the future.

As Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to work with Ontarians with disabilities on measures that will allow them to fully participate in building a stronger province. Our efforts support the government's commitment to make Ontario's communities strong, vital and accessible to people of all abilities.

Mary Anne Chambers
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004

Planning Commitments

Over the past year, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has continued to build on measures already taken to improve accessibility and eliminate barriers.

Policies and procedures have long been in place to ensure ministry staff, job applicants, and others with a range of disabilities receive the accommodation required. Ergonomic assessments are provided to staff, upon request, as are electronic and alternate formats of human resources and learning materials. Members of the public have multiple ways to access ministry information, products and services through the ministry website, TTY and by phone. Ministry publications are also provided in accessible formats, such as Braille, upon request.

In providing services to the public, the ministry has established guidelines for agencies providing Job Connect employment services to ensure they are delivered in an accessible facility or, where services are not accessible, that the agency has a plan to accommodate people with disabilities in an accessible location. In addition, all agencies must have community links with the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The ministry's Literacy and Basic Skills Unit has also developed an online learning tool designed to meet the needs of learners who are deaf.

Over the past year, the ministry has continued to build on measures already taken to improve accessibility and opportunities for people with a range of disabilities. It has also undertaken several initiatives to improve accessibility for its employees and the public.

The ministry's commitments and accomplishments for 2003-04 include:

<i>Commitment:</i>	Establish an accessibility planning team to assess progress made on the annual accessibility plan.
<i>Status:</i>	Completed
<i>Commitment:</i>	Review 19 acts that establish Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and all universities and their foundations to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities and to identify any barriers for people with disabilities.
<i>Status:</i>	Completed

Commitment:

Build on current practices to ensure that the impact on accessibility is considered in all new and ongoing policy and program development.

Status:

Completed and ongoing

Action/Timeframe:

To be continued on an ongoing basis

Commitment:

Review the orientation program for employees to ensure information on staff rights to accommodation, the managers' responsibility for accommodation and any associated mandatory training, is developed and included in all new packages and to include in that review, the ministry's intranet site to ensure that information on employee accommodation is clear and current.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Review the youth marketing initiative for the recruitment of young people into the Ontario Public Service to identify any barriers to the access of materials, presentations and locations.

Status:

Deferred

Rationale:

The ministry will revisit its approach to attract young people into the Ontario Public Service as new external hiring opportunities are identified.

Commitment:

Review the information technology advisory services to ensure that accessibility is considered in the procurement of software and applications for ministry branches and review the Information Technology Help Desk for services to staff with disabilities.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Ensure accessibility is considered when developing the new ministry e-mail guide.

Status:

In progress

Action/Timeframe:

The ministry working group will complete and release the guide by December 2004.

Commitment:

Build on current services to the public by ensuring that all front-line and telecommunications staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide good customer service to people with a broad range of disabilities.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Build on current accessibility practices in ministry field offices and identify priority areas for improved accessibility in facilities and communications over the long-term.

Status:

In progress

Status/Timeframe:

The ministry will continue to identify and remove barriers in its field offices as an ongoing commitment and as part of the development of its one-stop training and employment system.

Commitment:

Conduct focus groups with reception, frontline, public inquiry and JobGrow and Training Hotline staff to assess their level of knowledge about accessibility issues, the use of various alternate communication tools and the skills needed to provide good customer service to people with disabilities. A plan will be developed by the ministry to respond to any identified training needs.

Status:

In progress

Action/Timeframe:

The ministry will continue to raise awareness of disability issues as part of its ongoing commitment to build on its employment practices and processes to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.

Commitment:

Develop, over the next two years, a staff awareness and education campaign to raise awareness of disability issues and how to remove barriers for the public and staff. The campaign will involve:

- developing an accessibility awareness Intranet site;
- holding Lunch 'N' Learn sessions on disability issues; and
- having discussions about disability issues and providing services to people with disabilities in all staff meetings and the ministry's internal newsletter.

Status:

In progress

Action/Timeframe:

The ministry continues to raise awareness of disability issues. A module on leadership and disability, for example, was included in our leadership training program.

Commitment:

Build on existing procedures to improve evacuation procedures for people with disabilities.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Develop communication protocols to ensure that all public invitations and promotions of ministry meetings and events include a statement offering accommodation upon request.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Purchase new software to create accessible web pages and develop a new, accessible template for the ministry's Intranet site.

The following steps will also be taken:

- provide support and advice to branches to help them implement the new accessible Intranet template;
- provide updates and information on accessibility issues to staff involved in Intranet development;
- update the ministry Guide to Web Publishing to include information on accessibility for Intranet developers;
- review new web pages for accessibility before posting; and
- develop an accessibility checklist for general software and applications to ensure that all new information technology that is bought is accessible.

Status:

Completed

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

Over the next year, the ministry will continue to build on efforts already underway to improve opportunities and accessibility for people with disabilities and to prevent future barriers. Impact on accessibility will continue to be considered in key ministry processes, including policy and program development, planning, communications and event planning. The ministry will also build on measures to ensure that staff is aware of disability issues and have the knowledge and skills required to provide good customer service to people with disabilities.

Making sure that the ministry's website is fully accessible to people with a range of disabilities will continue to be a central part of the ministry's work. The ministry will also continue to broaden the way that its information, products and services can be accessed.

Legislative Requirements

Ministry Offices and Facilities

Commitment: Build on existing acts and regulations to improve barrier free accessibility in ministry buildings.

Action: Review design proposals to ensure that barrier free requirements in all acts and regulations are met.

Implement new procedures to ensure that all staff with disabilities are provided with a cell phone/walkie talkie and assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Procurement of Goods and Services

<i>Commitment:</i>	Implement the Guidelines for Procurement of Accessible Goods and Services.
<i>Action:</i>	Incorporate the guidelines into training sessions for staff responsible for the procurement of goods and services.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	Fall 2004
<i>Commitment:</i>	Build on the 2003-04 commitment to develop a checklist for software and applications dedicated to accessibility solutions.
<i>Action:</i>	Work with ministries across the public service, and the vendor community, to develop the checklist.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	March 2005

Internet Sites

<i>Commitment:</i>	Ensure that the ministry intranet and website meet or exceed accessibility requirements by carrying out the following measures: • provide ongoing expertise, quality assurance measures and advice on achieving compliance with the act; • carry out tests, as required, of community service cluster websites to ensure compliance with the act; • ensure that new web pages are accessible as defined by the act; • provide updates and information on accessibility issues to staff who develop Intranet sites; • implement the accessible intranet template ministry-wide; • review new web pages to ensure they are accessible; • update the software used for creating accessible web pages; • purchase new/upgrades to software to create accessible web pages; and • ensure that the Guide to Web Publishing contains current accessibility guidelines.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	Ongoing

Publications

Commitment:

Ensure that publications are available in alternate formats.

Status:

Ongoing

Action/Timeframe:

This is an ongoing commitment in consideration of the special needs of people with disabilities.

Capital Funding

Commitment:

Communicate to institutions that receive capital funding of the requirement to ensure that facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. In the Guidelines and Requirements for the Funding of Capital Projects that are part of the Facilities Renewal and Major Capital Support Programs, institutions are advised that, "Funding provided through this program is intended to be used to supplement the institution's own facilities and deferred maintenance programs to undertake repairs to existing facilities, including, improvements to remove accessibility barriers to people with disabilities and water system improvements."

Action/Timeframe:

Ongoing

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

All new acts, regulations, policies, programs and services will be assessed with respect to their impact on persons with disabilities.

Action:

Identify and address barriers

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Policies

Commitment:

Consider the accessibility needs of people with disabilities when policies and programs are developed.

Action:

Review new submissions to ensure that barriers to people with disabilities have been addressed.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Programs and Services

<i>Commitment:</i>	Continue to build on employment practices and processes to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities:
<i>Action:</i>	This commitment will be accomplished by: • incorporating an accessibility awareness component in orientation packages for all new staff and in performance agreements; • considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in recruitment practices; • providing training and support to managers and supervisors on how to meet the accessibility needs of employees and the accessibility requirements of job applicants; • ensuring that the Human Resources intranet site provides clear and current information; • completing the re-formatting of internal Human Resources Branch website in compliance with the act's accessibility format; and • developing outreach materials in alternate formats to facilitate accessibility and identify accessibility needs for any outreach activities.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	March 2005
<i>Commitment:</i>	Build on the current accessibility practices of ministry field offices and identify priority areas for improved accessibility in facilities and communications over the long-term.
<i>Action:</i>	Accessibility will be considered as the ministry develops its new one-stop training and employment system.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	In progress

Practices

<i>Commitment:</i>	Provide staff with a new e-mail guide that includes information on best practices in e-mail communications.
<i>Action:</i>	Review new ministry e-mail guide for accessibility considerations.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	December 2004

<i>Commitment:</i>	Raise staff awareness of accessibility issues and how to remove barriers for the public and staff.
<i>Action:</i>	Develop an action plan.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	March 2005

For more information

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

Please phone:

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1-800 number: 1-800-387-5514

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Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 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.

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