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Ministry of Northern Development and Mines 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines identified and removed barriers 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 MNDM 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

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 Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) complies with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) 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, and 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 Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) 2015 ODA Plan, celebrates the tenth

anniversary of the [AODA](#), demonstrates the ministry's ongoing commitment to being an accessibility leader and 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 and its two obligated agencies (the Ontario Northland Transportation Company - ONTC and the Owen Sound Transportation Company - OSTC) remain committed to ensuring that information and services are provided in a manner that present no barriers to Ontarians with disabilities, including employees.

In 2015, making [MNDM's](#) websites and web content accessible was a high priority, as the ministry conducted a thorough scan of their internet and intranet websites identifying documents that needed to be remediated putting a work plan into place to meet compliance under the [IASR](#).

[MNDM](#) could not meet its mandate without skilled and dedicated employees. We support individuals with disabilities through the hiring process as well as those who develop a disability while working for the ministry. We are committed to ensure our recruitment process is as inclusive as possible by identifying potential barriers and further building on our awareness of diversity, accessibility and inclusive practices. In addition, all staff received the necessary training to better understand their rights and obligations under the [AODA](#) and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In 2013, a very dedicated volunteer Ministry Inclusion Council was established and today it continues to be highly successful with employee representation across the province in every division. Our Inclusion Council members have become our true inclusion ambassadors, helping raise awareness of inclusion related topics across our ministry which includes promoting accessibility and building capacity among staff.

Section one: report on measures taken by [MNDM](#) 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 [MNDM](#) in 2015

[MNDM](#) continues to be committed to providing accessible services to our staff and the public we serve.

[MNDM](#) continued to implement the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation.

As an example, if Ontarians need any information in an alternate format, the ministry is ready to respond by email, by phone toll free, or by teletypewriter (TTY).

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Accessible formats and communications supports

Measures taken by MNDM in 2015

Accessibility is a powerful concept – it improves our communication, it brings more people together, and it increases our competitive advantage. MNDM is committed to providing accessible communications and information products to staff and the public we serve. Our website is a key way for customers, partners and stakeholders to get information and services from us. Making sure they are accessible to all Ontarians is essential for us to serve them effectively, and to meet our legislative requirements and mandate. It's just good business.

The ministry continued to support and implement the OPS' Accessibility@Source information campaign, communicating to all MNDM staff on the requirements for:

- including accessibility considerations in procurement practices
- creating accessible documents,
- OPS policies for accessible employment (OPS Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy)

MNDM uses video conferencing for delivering presentations and holding meetings with colleagues across the province, including other ministries and organizations. In 2015, MNDM held 1400+ video-conferencing events representing 72,620 minutes. Video-conferencing supports the diverse needs of ministry staff and clients, allows greater access, and enhances user experience by breaking down barriers such as travel and mobility. Because of its common usage in the ministry, employees with disabilities can feel that participating in meetings through this alternate mode is simply business as usual.

Ministry initiatives

- The ministry's Inclusion Council continues to be an instrumental part of raising awareness on accessibility. It includes educational initiatives for staff and managers, adopting the Inclusion Lens in our business practises and promoting awareness on inclusion topics
- The ministry's Inclusion Council created a Training Centre on the ministry's intranet website to be

used by employees as a resource library which includes accessible documents & meetings resources and training links. In addition, the Inclusion Council created its own in-house Accessible Document training and delivered three (3) in class sessions and one virtual session with 30% of the ministry in attendance.

- The ministry formed a cross divisional working group to review ministry applications for compliance under the IASR. In addition, our Communication Services Branch ensured that all new web content on MNDM's website was accessible.

Accessible feedback

The ministry continued to provide feedback mechanisms for the public through a range of communication channels, including:

- electronic contact through the ministry internet site
- telephone contact, including TTY service
- contact by correspondence and facsimile

Active offer

The ministry is committed to ensure an “active offer” of assistance so that persons with disabilities know what additional options may be available to help them access information and services.

We are committed to providing [accessible customer service](#). If you need accessible formats or communications supports, please [contact us](#)” is currently located on our Mines and Minerals webpage.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MNDM in 2015

MNDM is committed to providing a work environment where staff of allabilities have the opportunity to participate and contribute to their full potential by understanding needs and removing barriers. As an employer, MNDM works to attract and retain talented employees, including those with disabilities.

Best practices in place include:

- embedding accessibility throughout the recruitment process and in orientation materials
- employee accommodation and supports (e.g., provided telephone headsets for staff who have hearing disabilities and office equipment to assist employees with disabilities)
- following policies, directives and guidance for hiring and working with staff with disabilities, including

supporting alternative work arrangements when required and performing ergonomic assessments to improve work stations

- accommodation where needed for employees returning to work after an extended medical leave
- support for employees who receive employment accommodation, relative to performance management and career development (e.g., performance and learning plans)

As part of the annual talent management cycle all manager's performance plans include accessibility commitments

Where requested employees have been supplied with stand-up desks in order to have the option to stand at points during the day.

Continue to support flexible work arrangements

Delegates attended the 2015 JOIN Conference.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MNDM in 2015

All planned office renovations, which included a major office renovation at 159 Cedar Street, Sudbury, were designed and implemented in compliance with all regulatory requirements and Infrastructure Ontario's Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

Our 159 Cedar Street renovation included barrier free lunch rooms, wheel chair height kitchen sinks, electronic door openers in all corridors and washrooms. Created a Treadmill Room and Quiet Room for employees to use as needed.

MNDM Facilities and Accommodation specialists completed the Built Environment Standards training provided by the OPS Diversity Office.

General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff is 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 MNDM in 2015

The ministry is committed to being a leader in accessibility.

Procurement

Accessible procurement considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement or purchasing process. Goods and services that are accessible not only meet the needs of persons with disabilities, but are also highly practical for all members of the public.

Supported by the tools and templates from the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Supply Chain Ontario, and Management Board of Cabinet's Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive, the ministry continues to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.

Training

Investing in accessibility makes good business sense and the ministry is committed to ensuring our staff receives the right tools and resources to embed accessibility@source at all levels of the organization.

As such on an annual basis the ministry reviews and launches our mandatory training for all staff. In 2015, our mandatory training aligned to accessibility:

- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) in the OPS
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Information and Communication Standards
- May I Help You? – Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to know About Accessible Customer Service
- May I Help You? Welcoming Customers With Disabilities
- Working Together – The Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA
- Diversity – Using the OPS Inclusion Lens
- Managers & HR Professionals are required to take *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* Employment Standards
- Managers are required to take
 - Disability Accommodation
 - Leadership 1.0
- Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention for Staff
- Workplace Violence Prevention
 - Ministry Accommodation/Facility staff - Built Environment Standards training provided by the OPS Diversity Office.

For ministry staff that do not have access to the intranet, the ministry provides all mandatory training on a Compact Disc to support their access to information and training.

In addition, the ministry requires that all staff include mandatory training in their annual performance and learning and development plans. Managers are to review with staff as part of the annual performance management process/cycle.

Demonstrating leadership

In 2013, the ministry formed an Inclusion Council and created a framework for action to guide the activities of the Council to promote accessibility and build capacity among staff. Activities included:

- accessibility tips and informative links through ministry e-blasts
- assisted in the completion of MNDM's AODA Certificate of Assurance to OPS Diversity Office
- created in-house training on accessible documents
- promoted mandatory accessibility training for all ministry staff
- continued to endorse and promote the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens across the ministry in reviewing, developing and implementing ministry policies, programs and services. Examples include:
 - mandatory inclusion lens e-training for all ministry staff
 - the lens will be applied to other events and programs in the coming year
- added Inclusion as a theme for the ministry's employee recognition program, PRAISE
- supported the OPS Diversity Office's Inclusion Continuum Project

In addition, the ministry launched the 2015-2016 Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program to encourage executive and employee partners to engage in honest, open and meaningful dialogue about inclusion, diversity and accessibility. As well, the ministry had a staff representative on the OPS' Disability Advisory Council (DAC).

Each year our ministry is an exhibitor at Prospectors & Developers Association Convention (PDAC) in Toronto where it has 22,000+ attendees from over 100 countries with over 900 exhibitors and the ministry's organizing group contacted the Accessibility Lead to attend the convention to review MNDM's Ontario Pavilion for accessibility using the Inclusion Lens.

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 MNDM for 2016

MNDM will continue to be committed to providing accessible services to its staff and the public we serve.

MNDM will continue to implement the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation. We will continue to look for ways to ensure the right mechanisms are in place to respond to the diverse needs of the people we serve.

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 MNDM for 2016

MNDM will continue to be committed to providing accessible communications and information products to staff and the public we serve. We are committed to going above and beyond compliance to demonstrate leadership.

The ministry's Inclusion council will continue to build awareness and capacity through accessibility training to all levels of staff and use of the Inclusion Lens.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MNDM for 2016

MNDM will continue to be committed to providing a work environment where everyone can contribute to their full potential.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures proposed by MNDM for 2016

MNDM will continue to be committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings that both the public and staff use.

All planned office renovations, as well as any new office construction, will be designed and implemented in compliance with Infrastructure Ontario's Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government 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 proposed by MNDM for 2016

MNDM will continue to be committed to be a leader in accessibility. Proposed measures for 2016 include:

- reviewing mandatory training, identifying gaps and enhancing learning opportunities on an annual basis
- continuing to use the tools and templates provided by Supply Chain Ontario and Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive in support of procurement activities
- using enhanced procurement resources to ensure accessibility is considered at all stages of the procurement process and ensure vendors produce accessible applications and content

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

Introduction

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 51 statutes considered to have a high impact on persons with disabilities. This review has now been completed.

The ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities. Through our accessibility plan, we will continue to report the actions taken to

identify and remove barriers in ministry acts, regulations, policies, programs and services. The findings of the coordinated review of high impact statutes will inform our ministry’s approach to carry out this work.

Measures currently in place

MNDM is using the OPS Accessibility Review Tool and the 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

Upcoming plans for review

In the coming year, the ministry will continue with its scheduled review of acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services for barriers to persons with disabilities. In 2016 will review the *Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Act*, the *Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and Forestry Act*. In 2017, the *Ontario Northland Commission Act*. In 2018, the *Northern Services Board Act*. In 2019, the *Mining Act*

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Related

- [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](#)

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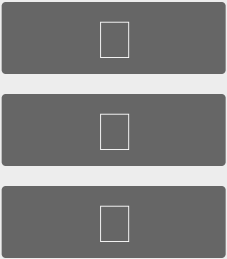
Arts and culture

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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