

Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office

*2007-2008
Accessibility Plan*



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Message from the Minister	3
Report on Achievements	3
2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives	4
Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives	10
Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers	12
Customer service	12
Employment accommodation	12
Communications and information	12
Built environment	13
Acts and regulations	13
Other	13
Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed	14
Customer service	14
Employment accommodation	15
Communications and information	16
Built environment	19
Acts and regulations	20
Other	20
For More Information	21

Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service, transportation, information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee. It was posted for public review on June 27, 2007 and will be available for public comment until September 28, 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April, 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans

must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Office of the Premier and the Cabinet Office. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

We intend to build on our achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister



I firmly believe that in Ontario, our greatest strength is our people. We succeed when everyone in our province can reach their full potential. That's why we're working hard to make sure our province is the most accessible it can be.

Our government's passage of the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005*, ushered in a new era of accessibility in Ontario. Our government is very proud of this legislation. It will help ensure that all Ontarians have the same opportunity to succeed at work, at home and at school.

Here at Cabinet Office, we are working together to identify, remove and prevent barriers — and we have achieved great results. Over the past year, we have added new accessibility features to my website, we have updated the Emergency Evacuation Handbook to include new evacuation procedures for people with disabilities and we have developed a multi-year plan to ensure all building and renovation projects are barrier-free.

We are committed to building on that success by continuing to look for new ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, whether they are employees, customers or stakeholders.

Working together, I'm confident we can make our province even stronger by helping everyone be at their best.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalton McGuinty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dalton McGuinty

Premier Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Office of the Premier provides staff support for the Premier of Ontario in his roles as head of the Executive Council and head of the Ontario government.

The Cabinet Office is the Premier's ministry. It provides the Premier and his Cabinet with advice and analysis to help the government achieve its priorities. To make this happen, Cabinet Office manages how the government makes decisions; works with ministries to coordinate policy and communications; monitors government strategies and measures results; provides administrative support to the Office of the Premier and Office of the Government House Leader; and liaises with the Lieutenant Governor.

As a result of their unique roles in the provincial government, the Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office do not directly administer legislation or regulations, or provide the kinds of programs and services that would generally be considered for review under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001*. Therefore, accessibility planning for the organization focuses on three main areas: the needs of employees or potential employees of the Premier's Office/Cabinet Office and other individuals who require access to the facilities; inclusion of accessibility considerations in the policy development process; and the provision of communications advice and services that produce information for the public.

The Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office was successful in achieving, and in some cases surpassing, planned commitments outlined in its 2006-2007 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Commitment

Cabinet Office will highlight accessibility on the Premier's website to indicate that the site is fully accessible, and the availability of alternate formats and TTY equipment.

Status

Complete

Action

Access to information on the Premier's website was improved by the addition of a teletypewriter (TTY) number to the *Feedback* page of the site. TTY phone service is available on the website to respond to inquiries from the public regarding Premier's correspondence. A summary of the website's accessibility features was created and posted on the *Help* page for easy reference.

Timeframe

2006-07

Commitment

Cabinet Office will designate a contact to provide information and/or coordinate assistance in response to any requests from persons with disabilities who access Cabinet Office-maintained internet websites.

Status

Complete

Action

Designated staff contacts in Cabinet Office Communications Division have been assigned to provide appropriate assistance in response to requests from individuals with disabilities seeking information from Cabinet Office-maintained internet websites.

Timeframe

2006-07

Commitment

Ensure that Cabinet Office employees are aware of updated emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities.

Status

Complete

Action

Through their work on the Queen's Park Campus Emergency Management and Security Committee, member ministries collaborated to produce an updated Emergency Evacuation Handbook for the locations constituting the Queen's Park Campus (which includes the Whitney Block). The Handbook features a convenient tab format to permit easy access to different types of evacuation information, including emergency procedures for people requiring assistance to evacuate a building. The Emergency Handbook was distributed to all staff within the Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office in spring 2007.

Timeframe

2006-07

Commitment

Cabinet Office will provide information to staff regarding best practices for accessible meetings.

Status

Complete

Action

A fact sheet was developed based on information from the internet website of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and posted for convenient staff reference in the Accessibility Planning section of the Cabinet Office intranet.

Timeframe

2006-07

Commitment

Cabinet Office will continue to assess and accommodate the employment-related accessibility needs of staff upon request, including by means of ergonomic assessment.

Status

Complete

Action

Employment accommodation measures and ergonomic assessments continued to be made available to Cabinet Office personnel, based on discussions and reviews completed between staff and management.

Timeframe

Complete for 2006-07 and ongoing for 2007-08

Commitment

Accessibility issues relating to information technology services will continue to be tracked as they arise and timely solutions provided where practicable.

Status

Complete

Action

Cabinet Office continued to monitor for any accessibility issues related to information technology systems and services during the year.

Timeframe

Complete for 2006-07 and ongoing for 2007-08

Commitment

In order to ensure that all building and renovation projects comply with the Ontario Building Code requirements for people with disabilities, the Ontario Realty Corporation Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities will continue to be implemented as applicable.

Status

Complete

Action

Cabinet Office developed a multi-year Accommodations Planning Framework to ensure that a strategic facilities management decision-making process is in place and firmly based on OPS and internal organizational business requirements. A key principle underlying the planning framework is for all accommodations initiatives to be consistent with MGS corporate directives and guidelines on barrier-free access. Renovations and building maintenance activities currently in progress comply with the Ontario Realty Corporation Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

Timeframe

Complete for 2006-07 and ongoing for 2007-08

Commitment

The Cabinet Office accessibility planning group will continue to identify and address barriers through the appropriate forum. The group will also monitor and report to senior management on the implementation of this plan.

Status

Complete

Action

Members of the Cabinet Office accessibility planning group directly supported the implementation of various aspects of the plan, particularly in the areas of enhancing access to web communications and the removal of physical barriers.

Core members met quarterly to monitor the plan's overall implementation status and identify opportunities for further initiatives to improve accessibility. The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer was kept apprised of the planning group's work and status of plan implementation. Relevant items were also brought before the Whitney Block Users Committee (WBUC) for discussion and appropriate action.

Timeframe

Complete for 2006-07 and ongoing for 2007-08

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office identified a number of accessibility commitments in the 2006-07 that were components of multi-year initiatives. Work is underway and progressing on schedule. This section provides a status report.

Commitment

Cabinet Office, working with the Whitney Block Users' Committee and in cooperation with facilities management and the Ontario Realty Corporation, will continue to champion the implementation of any feasible infrastructure improvements to address accessibility issues.

Status

In progress

Action

As reported in the POCO Accessibility Plan 2006-07, the Whitney Block Users' Committee (chaired by Cabinet Office) had initiated a request for facilities management and the Ontario Realty Corporation to investigate the feasibility of installing an entrance ramp for the Whitney Block, a historically significant property built in 1925. Preliminary site analysis and initial design options were prepared by a consultant.

In spring 2007, the Ontario Realty Corporation confirmed its intent to proceed with the development of the final ramp design and the initiation of the required environmental assessment in 2007-08.

Action

Visual/audible alarms are being installed and fire alarm pull stations are being lowered to a barrier-free height in compliance with Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines.

Timeframe

2007-08

Rationale

The addition of a major external structure, such as an entrance ramp, to the historically significant Whitney Block constitutes a multi-phased undertaking spanning a number of years. 2007-08 will see the development of the final ramp design and the initiation of the environmental assessment process. Work is proceeding on schedule.

The upgrade of the fire safety system (alarms and pull stations) is one component of a comprehensive, multi-year mechanical and life safety project involving the exterior and interior of the Whitney Block. As the various aspects of the overall project must be closely coordinated with each other, some adjustments were made to the original timelines of individual project components. The overall project is proceeding on schedule.

Commitment

As a component of the comprehensive Whitney Block upgrades project, an Elevator Voice Annunciation system will be installed in Whitney Block elevators.

Status In progress

Action

Work on the installation of a voice annunciation system in Whitney Block elevators proceeded during 2006-07 as one of a number of initiatives within the larger Whitney Block upgrades project.

Rationale

As indicated in the Commitment above, the Whitney Block upgrades project comprises a comprehensive range of mechanical and life safety initiatives, involving work to the building's interior and exterior over several years. The project's scope and complexity required adjustments to the original timelines of individual components so that the project as a whole could proceed in a coordinated manner. The overall upgrades project is targeted for completion by the end of 2007-08, by which time the annunciation system is expected to be in operation.

Timeframe 2007-08

Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office commits to: support the needs of employees or potential employees of the Premier's Office/Cabinet Office and other individuals who require access to the facilities; include accessibility considerations in the policy development process; and provide communications advice and services that produce information for the public. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

- Cabinet Office will continue to ensure that reception staff receive appropriate training to operate TTY devices.

Employment accommodation

- New employees to the Premier's Office and Cabinet Office will be made aware through their general orientation package that employment-related accessibility measures are available for people with disabilities.
- Awareness of accessibility will continue to be promoted throughout Cabinet Office by means of regular information updates to staff. Timely reminders regarding the requirement to undertake *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* training will continue to be sent to Cabinet Office management.

Communications and information

- Internet websites maintained by Cabinet Office, including the Premier's website, will continue to comply with the accessibility guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) through its Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).
- Cabinet Office publications will continue to be made available in alternate formats, if requested, in compliance with provisions of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

- Information technology services used by the Premier's Office and Cabinet Office will continue to be monitored for possible accessibility issues and timely solutions will be provided where practicable.

Built environment

- Cabinet Office will request that any accommodations planning studies and analysis consider and identify barrier-free compliance issues.

Acts and regulations

- As part of its regular analysis of Cabinet submissions, Cabinet Office will continue to include considerations, where appropriate, of implications for persons with disabilities and of how the proposed initiative would further the government's goal of a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.
- Cabinet Office staff will help implement the accessibility standards development process by supporting the inter-ministerial team to assist with the continuing implementation of standards.

Other

- All procurement activities will continue to be undertaken in accordance with corporate directives, guidelines and processes, (e.g. Guidelines for Procurement of Accessible Goods and Services under the ODA) which provide for the requirements of persons with disabilities in the purchase of goods or services. Staff will also continue to keep abreast of new corporate accessibility requirements for procurement.
- Every effort will continue to be made to ensure that funding is available (through corporate funds or internally) to address accessibility initiatives. Costs associated with accessibility initiatives will continue to be processed in a timely fashion to ensure that there are no delays in meeting accessibility objectives.

Commitments —

Barriers to be Addressed

The Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Barrier

Because the organization's regular business primarily involves internal interaction with members of the Ontario Public Service, and not the external delivery of direct services to the public, the importance of customer service training may be overlooked by staff.

Commitment

The value and relevance of good customer service practices to the work of the Premier's Office and Cabinet Office will be highlighted for all staff through the promotion of the E-Learning module "May I Help You: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" offered by the Centre for Leadership and Learning through the OPS intranet MyOPS.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Employment accommodation

Barrier

Managers and staff may not be aware of new corporate policy developments regarding employment accommodation and return to work provisions.

Commitment

Awareness of the new corporate Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy will be promoted among managers and staff in the Premier's Office and Cabinet Office.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

Accessibility considerations may not be sufficiently highlighted and addressed in the Premier's Office/Cabinet Office's emergency management and business continuity planning efforts to date.

Commitment

Accessibility factors will be integrated into the emergency management planning of the Premier's Office and Cabinet Office by incorporating provisions of the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities (joint publication of Emergency Management Ontario and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario) into the Premier's Office/Cabinet Office business continuity plan. The Emergency Preparedness Guide will also be made available to staff on the Cabinet Office intranet.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

Staff with disabilities may experience difficulties in fulfilling their job responsibilities under standard working conditions.

Commitment

The Cabinet Office Human Resources Plan will reflect the organization's commitment to support the needs of all employees, including staff with disabilities, through various means such as flexible working arrangements. Cabinet Office will also continue to assess and accommodate the employment-related accessibility needs of staff upon request, including by means of ergonomic assessment.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Communications and information

Barrier

Because OPS intranets are intended for use by internal staff only and not by an external public audience, accessibility features in intranet development may not be given the same level of consideration as in external internet development.

Commitment

The Cabinet Office intranet revitalization project will produce an intranet site that complies with the accessibility guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) through its Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch in partnership with Central Agencies Information and Information Technology Cluster

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

Internet website updates can be too narrowly focused on basic content and visual attractiveness, without providing for equally important accessibility and navigability factors.

Commitment

The Premier's Onzone website for youth will be built to comply with the accessibility guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) through its Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Responsibility

Communications Division

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

The importance of making our workplaces and communities accessible to all citizens is reflected in the increasing number of noteworthy advances in the accessibility field. It may be difficult for staff in the organization to keep current on developments in the area of accessibility.

Commitment

The Accessibility Planning section of the Cabinet Office intranet will be reviewed and expanded to cover a wider range of accessibility topics through additional articles, tips and helpful links. Efforts will aim to increase awareness of less well known and less obvious obstacles to accessibility, such as attitudinal barriers.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

Regular staff turnover within the organization and in other ministries that are tenants of the Whitney Block may result in situations where new personnel in the building are not familiar with established evacuation procedures.

Commitment

Cabinet Office will coordinate two emergency evacuation sessions this year:

- evacuation warden training session for all Whitney Block wardens and their back-ups (wardens are drawn from all tenant ministries housed in the Whitney Block)
- general emergency evacuation information session for all Premier's Office/ Cabinet Office staff

Both sessions will address emergency procedures for staff/visitors with disabilities as well as remind staff needing assistance to evacuate to self-identify to their managers so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

Built environment

Barrier

Most doorknobs in the organization's office areas are round and therefore may be difficult to use by people with limited use of their hands.

Commitment

As part of its multi-year facilities/accommodations strategy, the Premier's Office/Cabinet Office will initiate discussions with the Ontario Realty Corporation regarding the feasibility of replacing existing round doorknobs with lever-style doorknobs throughout its offices.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch in partnership with the Ontario Realty Corporation

Timeline 2007-08

Barrier

The Whitney Block, in common with other older, historically significant buildings, may contain features that are in legal non-compliance with current barrier-free provisions in the Ontario Building Code.

Commitment

The Ontario Realty Corporation's Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities will continue to be implemented as applicable so that all building and renovation projects are brought into compliance with the Ontario Building Code requirements for people with disabilities.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch in partnership with the Whitney Block Users Committee and the Ontario Realty Corporation

Timeline 2007-08

Acts and regulations

Barrier

Ambitious and far-reaching in scope, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* provides mandatory accessibility standards and regulations to remove barriers in some of the most important aspects of people's lives. The process of developing the associated regulations and moving them through the review process to final approval can be lengthy and time-consuming.

Commitment

Cabinet Office staff will provide active support to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in bringing forward service standard regulations for approval under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Responsibility

Policy Division

Timeline 2007-08

Other

Barrier

Prior to the enactment of accessibility legislation, there was no formal process in place to identify and address accessibility issues.

Commitment

The Cabinet Office accessibility planning group will continue to identify and address barriers through the appropriate forum. The group will also monitor and report to senior management on the implementation of this plan.

Responsibility

Corporate Planning and Services Branch

Timeline 2007-08

For More Information

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

Please phone: Office of the Director
Corporate Planning and Services Branch
Room 3540, Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

General inquiry number: 416 325-1941

TTY number: 416 325-7702

E-mail: odapublicinquiries@ontario.ca

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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

ServiceOntario Publications
777 Bay St., Suite M212, Market Level, Toronto ON, M5G 2C8. Tel: (416) 326-5300
Out of town customers, except Ottawa, call: 1-800-668-9938
In Ottawa, call (613) 238-3630 or toll-free: 1-800-268-8758
TTY Service: 1-800-268-7095

Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN # 1911-5083

Ce document est disponible en français.

