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Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2015 and future accessibility commitments for 2016.

ISSN: 1911-5083

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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 Office of the Premier and Cabinet Office (hereafter referred to collectively as the Ministry) 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'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 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) as we continue on our path to an accessible Ontario in 2025.

Section one: report on ministry commitments and measures taken

Over the past year, the Ministry has sought to build upon its past achievements and continue progress towards the fulfillment of its accessibility commitments. Under each of the five priorities below, the measures taken in 2015 and those proposed for 2016 have been combined to better reflect the ongoing nature of these commitments.

Leadership

The Ministry occupies a unique position as a strategic leader to the entire OPS. The following commitments help ensure that 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.

Commitment: guidance and ministry support

- The Ministry rolled out an “HTML-first” plan for Ontario.ca that prioritizes fully accessible HTML content over PDFs and other proprietary formats.
- The Ministry worked closely with all other ministries to determine how to best make this transition, and how to inventory and prioritize content for conversion to HTML.
- For ministries already on Ontario.ca, a dedicated project team in the Ministry inventoried and reviewed documents, managing their migration from PDF to HTML.
- The Ministry also developed guidance to support accessible graphics and HTML content, and made changes to Ontario.ca's interface to restrict inaccessible scripts and other code.
- Cabinet Office has been an active voice within the OPS Accessibility and Web Coordinators communities to help promote the core principles of accessibility and make web content and features available to all Ontarians.

Commitment: encouraging the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens to review Cabinet submissions

- Where appropriate, the Ministry's Policy and Delivery team reviewed Cabinet submissions using the OPS Inclusion Lens to identify accessibility barriers and support the government's commitment to an accessible Ontario by 2025.
- Cabinet Office played an advisory role for ministries with regard to incorporating the Inclusion Lens in the policy development process.
- References to the Inclusion Lens are built into Cabinet Office tools and resources that support policy development and the analysis of regulations and legislation.
- Where appropriate, Cabinet Office policy advisors incorporated analysis related to the Inclusion Lens into briefings for senior officials and the Premier's Office, and Cabinet briefing materials.
- Where appropriate, new Ministry acts, regulations and policies were reviewed using the OPS Inclusion Lens.

Commitment: enhancing election accessibility in Ontario

- Accessibility is identified as a key priority in Elections Ontario's Strategic Plan for 2013-2017.
- The Ministry continues to support the Chief Electoral Officer and Elections Ontario in the implementation of accessibility measures, as appropriate.

Commitment: accessibility-related courses on learning.comm

- The Ministry continues to adhere to its commitment on accessibility-related courses on learning.comm.
- The rooms in which courses are facilitated are all accessible. Facilitators, as part of their contracts, are prepared to accommodate any accessibility needs requested by the participants.
- The Ministry offers a course in which participants learn about creating accessible information, and the value of inclusive design. This demonstration-based workshop also focuses on common issues around the accessibility of information (from colour contrast to font choices), and what can be done to best address those issues.

Commitment: OIC online initiative

- Cabinet Office is currently working towards posting Orders in Council (OICs) online, while ensuring OICs meet AODA accessibility standards.

Commitment: people of all abilities represented in government communications

- The Ontario Photo Library is continually updated to reflect the diverse people of Ontario. The Library is a database of photos and images used in the online and printed publications produced by the Ontario government and its agencies.
- The Ontario Photo Library continues to support diversity, accessibility and inclusion by offering a

collection of photos that represents people of all abilities, cultural and generational backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities. The Ministry made efforts to ensure the Photo Library is inclusive in every aspect and continues to update photos on a regular basis to reflect this. The Ministry recently concluded a photo-shoot depicting seniors of varying cultures and abilities, women in the community, and Ontario families as multifaceted, diverse entities.

- Images are available for use by the OPS to ensure people of all abilities are represented in government publications.

Customer service

The following commitments ensure that people with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Commitment: training on accessible customer service and Integrated Accessibility Standards

- Cabinet Office's list of mandatory training courses was reviewed and updated in February 2015 to ensure IASR compliance and alignment with the enterprise-wide mandatory course list available on LearnON. The updated training document was provided to all Cabinet Office managers for distribution to their employees.
- This training document is sent to all new Ministry employees via email, and consideration is being given to enhancing communication tactics, for example by making it available to all staff at any time on the Ministry's intranet site.
- The training document identifies accessibility training information and requirements to ensure AODA and IASR compliance.

Commitment: training on OPS Inclusion Lens

- Accessibility considerations were reinforced through the ongoing distribution of orientation materials to new Cabinet Office staff, recommending that OPS Inclusion Lens Training be taken within their first six months in the position.
- A preliminary audit of training completion was conducted, which will aid the Ministry in further promoting the importance of the Inclusion Lens to all employees.
- Consideration is being given to enhancing the promotion of Inclusion Lens training resources, for example by leveraging the Cabinet Office intranet site.
- The Ministry will continue to monitor training completion rates and promote the tool.

Commitment: accessible procurement practices

- The completion of Supply Chain Ontario's checklist for meeting accessibility obligations is required

in advance of any procurement activities, and confirmation of the completion of the checklist continues to be included in all procurement business cases.

- The identification of accessible document formats remains a part of procurement processes for speakers and other vendors where appropriate.
- Advice on accessibility impacts relating to purchasing activities in accordance with the IASR, corporate directives and processes continues to be provided to Ministry staff.
- The Ministry remains in compliance with ODA and AODA procurement requirements under the IASR.

Commitment: feedback on accessibility

- The Ministry's established feedback protocol ensures that feedback is collected by various methods for the convenience of clients including by phone, email, teletypewriter and feedback forms.
- All feedback requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (ASCS) and the IASR continue to be met to aid in the prevention and removal of barriers in the Ministry.

Commitment: participation in accessibility-themed committees and initiatives

- The Ministry continues to support the OPS Disability Advisory Council through Ministry representative participation, and to share information provided by the Council on any new initiatives or direction for consideration.
- The Ministry is committed to participating in all relevant accessibility-themed OPS events, initiatives and committees.

Commitment: Inclusion Steering Committee and Ambassador Team

- The Ministry continues to work towards fulfilling its 2013-16 Inclusion Plan commitments, which promote awareness and understanding in the area of accessibility.
- The Steering Committee continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of ongoing inclusion and accessibility-themed initiatives, which includes:
 - the creation of the Inclusion Speakers' Bureau, a pool of speakers and subject matter experts who can be called upon to deliver training and information sessions on inclusion-themed topics
 - the development of an inclusive onboarding checklist, which will serve as a comprehensive orientation tool for new employees and their hiring managers
 - the distribution within the Ministry of Inclusion Spotlight e-mails and accessibility-themed "Did You Know" posters, which have been widely well-received

Commitment: Teletypewriter equipment

- The Ministry has migrated from Teletypewriter (TTY) service at central reception to a desktop solution in order to modernize and expand communication services for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or speech-impaired.
- Responsible managers and staff have received training on the new TTY system. Training will continue to be provided to new staff members as part of their orientation.
- The Ministry continues to partner with ServiceOntario staff to respond to calls after hours.

Information and communications

The following commitments ensure that Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Commitment: improvements to the Ontario.ca website

- In collaboration with Treasury Board Secretariat, the Ministry continued to test and implement accessibility improvements to the Ontario.ca website.
- To support improved accessibility, several new web features were developed, including:
 - interactive data tables with sort and search capabilities.
 - an HTML-only format for long, chapter-based publications, with an improved reading experience online.
 - new HTML patterns for fully-accessible infographics. Examples include a custom calculator for Ontario Retirement Pension Plan amounts, a timeline feature for Climate Change Strategy, and fact bubbles that highlight key figures around Syrian refugee resettlement.
 - an HTML-only format for the Ontario Gazette and Land Registration applications.

Commitment: accessible ministry public and intranet websites

- As the ministry responsible for the Ontario.ca platform and website, Cabinet Office played a key leadership role in guiding the OPS towards fulfilling the requirements of the IASR, which came into effect on January 1, 2016.
- Ministries are responsible for the accessibility of their individual content posted on Ontario.ca. Cabinet Office has worked with ministries with content on Ontario.ca to identify and remediate inaccessible content.
- As a platform, Ontario.ca is highly accessible, and meets or exceeds IASR requirements.
- All websites maintained directly by the Ministry, including the two public websites ([Office of the Premier](#) and [Ontario Newsroom](#)) and the four internal websites for the Secretary of the Cabinet, Cabinet Office, learning.comm and Photo Library, continue to meet or exceed the requirements of the IASR.

Commitment: accessibility and the Policy Gateway

- The Policy Gateway intranet site was launched in 2013. Web pages were designed in consultation with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to comply with accessibility requirements. All posted website content is accessible.

Commitment: publications in alternate formats

- Publications in alternate formats continued to be available upon request by Ministry clients and staff, and members of the public.
- The Ministry works with the appropriate organizations, such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind for Braille formats and the Marketing and Digital Services Unit within the Ministry for accessible text and audio, as required.
- Cabinet Office Communications produces descriptive transcripts for all videos belonging to the Ministry.
- The Ministry is prepared to respond to any requests for publications in alternate formats.

Commitment: accessible emergency procedures

- The Ministry is prepared to provide staff with individualized emergency response procedures when required. This includes the identification of evacuation buddies and a designated waiting area.
- The Ministry is prepared to provide emergency evacuation procedures and Continuity of Operations Plans to staff in alternative formats upon request.
- The Ministry considers accessibility when developing emergency procedures, and collaborates with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to provide staff with accessible emergency preparedness materials (e.g. pamphlets, posters) on request.

Commitment: use plain language to expand reach and impact

- Ongoing use of clear writing principles and standards has been integrated into Ministry communications processes, and plain language deliverables are included in OPS Communications Directors' performance plans.
- A new learning.comm Communications Fundamentals course for OPS communicators teaches best practices in writing plain language communications for media products. The course is offered quarterly, with four sessions to date.
- An in-house Accessibility at the Source training course is offered to Cabinet Office Communications employees to encourage them to create documents with accessibility in mind.

Commitment: accessible marketing and social media

- Descriptive transcripts and captioning for all government videos are available on the government's YouTube channel.
- The Ministry has added a note to its social media channels directing audiences to accessible versions of video content on the YouTube channel.
- The Ministry checks social media content for colour contrast and font size to ensure legibility.
- The Ministry has developed and released an Advertising and Accessibility guide to ensure accessibility in advertising and media buys.

Employment

The following commitments ensure that OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Commitment: barrier-free recruitment and employment

- Cabinet Office Human Resources (HR) provides direct support to managers in planning and executing recruitment processes, and guidance regarding the onboarding of new staff.
- Each step of all recruitment processes is considered against the Inclusion Lens to ensure that opportunities for improvement are identified and addressed.
- All recruitment materials such as job ads, interview questions and tests are reviewed to ensure that they are fair, accessible and inclusive. Job postings notify candidates about the availability of accommodation.
- Interview locations are considered within the context of the Inclusion Lens to ensure that they do not present any barriers.
- Accommodation is offered to all job candidates upon notification of interview, as well as at time of job offer to the successful candidate. Where accommodation was required, the needs of the candidate were met.
- Managers are fully supported and provided with the necessary guidance, tools and/or resources to help ensure that all accommodation needs are met during the recruitment process as well as during the course of the employment relationship.

Commitment: inclusion performance commitments

- Internal Ministry communications to managers promoted the incorporation of inclusion performance commitments into all employee performance and learning plans to enhance inclusion-based knowledge and skills. The communication also provided a link to example performance commitments developed by the OPS Diversity Office.
- A representative sample of performance plan commitments was reviewed among managers and

staff, and provided the Ministry with an opportunity to better integrate inclusion performance commitments into individual plans going forward.

Built environment

The following commitments help ensure that there is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Commitment: built environment standard

- Public parking spaces and other accommodations in the Ministry remain accessible, as outlined in the Ontario Building Code's barrier-free design requirements and internal OPS Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.
- Ministry managers and employees responsible for activities related to the built environment received mandatory training to meet the requirement for the Design of Public Spaces standard under the IASR that came into effect on January 1, 2015.

Commitment: accessibility of bathrooms, boardrooms and heritage space

- Ongoing consideration is given to improving the accessibility of the Ministry's built environment while taking into account the heritage designation of the building.
- In collaboration with the Ministry's Building Management, work continued on the project to improve the accessibility of Whitney Block washrooms.
- Washroom design includes allowance for a larger turning radius to accommodate both wheelchairs and scooters, and was implemented during the construction phase.
- Duress alarm buttons were installed in each washroom to alert the Legislative Security Service (LSS) of the specific location where assistance is required. All LSS officers have been trained to respond to the alarms.

Section two: 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 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. The Ministry will continue to report through our 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 the Ministry’s approach to carrying out this work.

Measures currently in place

The Ministry is committed to continuing to review legislation to find and remove barriers to accessibility. As well, the Ministry will ensure that any of its activities related to drafting, reviewing or amending legislation take accessibility into consideration.

The Ministry will continue to review all legislation that is introduced, drafted or relevant to the Ministry for accessibility and inclusion. It will use the [OPS Inclusion Lens](#) and will ensure these reviews are updated to include lessons learned from the review of the high impact statutes.

Updated: June 17, 2016
Published: June 17, 2016

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