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2008-2009 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessible Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of Labour's sixth annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

An example of The Ministry of Labour's commitment to supporting the development of standards and removing barriers was the implementation of the Ontario Reality Corporation's (ORC) Barrier-Free Guidelines during renovations at:

- Office of the Worker Adviser (OWA) – Toronto
- Regional Office – Ottawa
- Provincial Claims Centre – Sault Ste Marie
- Signage upgrade (approx 50% of head Office signage)
- Door operator installed – Hamilton OWA office.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#) (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Labour to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans09.htm.

2008 – 2009 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ontario Ministry of Labour has achieved a substantial number of the planned commitments outlined in its 2007-08 accessibility plan. The commitments for 2008-09 were developed throughout the ministry's various program areas. Most of the ministry's commitments represent a continuation from the previous year, as ongoing monitoring and improvement initiatives in those areas were identified as priorities for the ministry.

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Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into effect on January 1, 2008.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Section 5 of the ODA – Accessibility in Procurement of Goods and Services

Commitment:

Program areas will take accessibility issues into account in procurement of goods and services and to implement the Ministry of Government Services (MGS) guidelines on procurement.

Planned Action(s):

1. Will continue to provide MGS guidelines to new managers and staff who have procurement responsibilities through the ministry's orientation package.
2. Will also continue to review our current and new procurement practices to ensure they meet requirements of the MGS guidelines.
3. Guidance and direction will be provided to managers and staff responsible for procurement via internal communications as and when required.
4. Managers, with the help of the Economics and Transportation Cluster (ETC), will continue to adhere the ministry's requirement that all Internet applications being procured are accessible to people with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe:

Ongoing for all the above.

Results Achieved:

MGS guidelines were provided to new managers through the ministry's orientation package

and Management Development Program, coordinated by the Human Resources Branch.

Section 6 of the ODA – Improvements in Accessibility of Ministry Internet Sites

Commitment:

Continue to ensure that all new information posted to the existing and new external websites are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

1. The Communications and Marketing Branch (CMB) will continue work closely with program areas to address website accessibility issues.
2. CMB and ETC will continue to ensure that new Internet applications implemented and managed by ETC are accessible to people with disabilities. The ministry will follow the established ministry process that provides for ETC to notify the website administrator and provide assistance where possible in instances where websites are managed by a customer.
3. The CMB will continue to advocate for the production of new published materials in accessible alternative formats and to improve intranet website accessibility.
4. The MOL internet site will be redesigned as a part of the government's Online Design Program. This will include a thorough review of the site's accessibility and ways of improving accessibility.
5. The CMB will continue to advise program areas on intranet accessibility issues, provide guidance to program areas that request assistance in preparing publications in alternative formats.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for 1, 2, 3 and 5
Item #4 targeted for March 2009

Results Achieved:

The MOL intranet site was redesigned and relaunched in December 2007 to be user-friendly and improve accessibility.

Programs and Services

Commitment:

Ensure that ODA requirements are taken into account in Results-based Planning.

Planned Action(s):

1. Program areas will be reminded of the need to consider ODA requirements in developing or implementing any new activities and initiatives.
2. New initiatives will be reviewed by Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) to ensure accessibility issues, are taken into account through Results-based Planning process.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Commitment:

Enhance ODA awareness for managers and employees.

Planned Action(s):

1. Ministry Coordination Unit (MCU) will be assuming responsibility for providing ODA information and tips on improving accessibility to managers and employees via internal communication tools.
2. ODA issues will continue to be incorporated into the orientation package developed by HRB and updated as needed, for distribution to new employees.
3. Implementation of the ministry's accessibility commitments and strategies will continue to be an ongoing responsibility for ministry managers and staff, including the ministry's accessibility planning working group.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Commitment:

Resolve disability issues by responding and assisting the general public.

Planned Action(s):

1. MCU will provide ODA information and tips to managers and employees on improving accessibility via internal communication tools.
2. To provide the latest available ODA information and tips on improving accessibility, and to resolve disability issues from both internal and external sources, there will be ongoing consultation with the program areas, the Accessibility Directorate Office (ADO) and other ministries.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Section 10 of the ODA – Ministry Accessibility Planning

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group consisting of representatives from different divisions will continue to coordinate and monitor the development and implementation of the ministry's accessibility plan.

Planned Action(s):

1. Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) Facilities group and the MCU will continue to work closely with program areas to address and identify accessibility issues.
2. Updates on commitments from program areas and executive update reports on the plan will be established with quarterly reports going to Senior Management Committee (SMC).
3. CMB & MCU will continue to provide managers and employees, through established internal communications and other channels (e.g. the ministry's ODA e-mail account), with suggestions for accessibility improvement.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group will continue to look for ways to improve the ministry's accessibility plan.

Planned Action(s):

1. Representatives from Ministry's Accessibility Planning group, Joint Health & Safety Committee, Business Support Unit (responsible for facilities management) and the Ministry Coordination Unit, will continue to work toward the development and implementation of a strategy to enhance the ministry's efforts to improve accessibility for employees and people with disabilities who come in contact with the ministry.
2. A joint review of the head office Emergency Evacuation Protocols will be undertaken to ensure staff with disabilities are adequately protected in case of Emergency Evacuation situations.

Implementation Timeframe:

Ongoing for 1.

Item #2 to be undertaken in March 2009.

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Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

Focus Area: Employment

Section 8 of the ODA – Employment Accommodation

Commitment:

Accommodate the accessibility needs of employees/applicants with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

1. Reminder regarding the importance of accommodating the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities will continue to be communicated through internal emails, one-on-one to Managers and human resources staff.
2. Tele-typewriter (TTY) training for program staff is provided on an on-going basis, and the TTY process commitments are provided to the program areas as needed.
3. Applications will be made to the Employment Accommodation Fund to meet accessibility needs of the ministry on an as needed basis.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Commitment:

Ensure that our managers and supervisors take the ODA on-line training.

Planned Action(s):

1. All new managers/supervisors must complete ODA on-line training within 90 days.
2. The requirement to complete ODA on-line training is part of the ministry's orientation program.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Policies

Commitment:

Continue to monitor the application of staffing policy/process to ensure accessibility issues are properly addressed and accommodated.

Planned Action(s):

1. Ministry Coordination Unit (MCU) staff will provide regular reminders to ensure applicants with accessibility issues are appropriately accommodated. The Human Resources Branch (HRB) will provide appropriate advice and assistance on accessibility issues to managers as required.
2. Managers hiring employees under the Summer Experience Program (SEP) will be reminded and informed about any amendments under the ODA in order to provide appropriate accommodation for qualified candidates. This reminder was and will continue to be included as part of the SEP information package to managers.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Results Achieved:

Managers hiring employees under the Summer Experience Program (SEP) were reminded and informed about amendments under the ODA, in order to provide appropriate accommodation for qualified candidates. This reminder was provided as part of the SEP information package to managers.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Section 7 of the ODA – Publications in Alternative Format

Commitment:

Provide publications in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

1. Continue to provide publications in alternative, accessible formats, as technology permits.
2. Continue to work with Publications Ontario to provide the ministry's new and existing publications in alternate formats to people with disabilities, as requested.
3. Continue to recommend the publication of new materials in alternative formats for people with disabilities.
4. Provide guidance to program areas requesting assistance in preparing publications in alternative formats.
5. Continue to participate in Ontario Public Service (OPS) wide accessibility discussions and committees related to new technologies and draft guideline/policy development

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Section 4 of the ODA – Accessibility to Government Buildings, Structures and Premises

Commitment:

Use every effort to ensure that ministry facilities (including future locations) are accessible to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

1. ORC Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will be applied in all relocation/renovation projects.
2. The Business Support Unit of the Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) will continue to work with managers to identify opportunities and address areas that require accessibility improvement (as an employer and a service provider).

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Results Achieved:

ORC Barrier-Free Guidelines have been applied during renovations to the following

locations:

1. OWA Office – Toronto
2. Regional Office – Ottawa
3. Provincial Claims Centre – Sault Ste Marie
4. Signage upgrade (approx 50% of head Office signage)
5. Door operator installed – Hamilton OWA office.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Continue to monitor the application of ministry related acts and regulations to ensure there are no barriers to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

1. Legal Service Branch (LSB) and Policy, Program Development & Dispute Resolution Services Division (PPDDRSD) will continue to be vigilant by monitoring the application of ministry related statutes and regulations to identify accessibility barriers or issues.
2. The Ontario Ministry of Labour will continue to support the Employment Accessibility Standards Development (EA-SD) Process as lead ministry for the development of an employment standard. The EA-SD committee is currently in the process of meeting to develop an employment standard.

Implementation Timeframe:

On-going, pending amendments to existing acts/regulations or enactment of new acts/regulations for 1.

A draft employment standard for public review is expected in early 2009 for 2.

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For More Information

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

Please phone:

- General inquiry number: 416-326-6267
- TTY number: 416-314-5811

E-mail: ODAinquiries@mol.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address:

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

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