

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

(PDF version for printing coming soon)

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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.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Culture. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-2006 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-07 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its 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



On behalf of Ontario's Ministry of Culture, it is my pleasure to present my ministry's 2006-07 Accessibility Plan. This is the fourth year in which plans have been written and implemented by public sector organizations, and here at the Ministry of Culture we continue to build on the success of our previous three plans to look for better ways to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

As you know, this year the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* celebrates its first anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, our government recently announced three new accessibility standards to be developed in the areas of communications and information, the built environment and employment. This is in addition to two standards already being developed, which deal with

customer service and transportation.

We are committed to working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders to improve accessibility in these key areas by identifying, removing and preventing barriers. We will continue our effort to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with the Ministry of Culture, whether they are staff, ministry stakeholders, or members of the general public.

Our work to better educate staff on accessibility will also continue. I am proud that all program areas of my ministry, as well as corporate representatives, participate on our accessibility planning team. Team members are available within the workplace to answer questions and to promote one of our key goals: awareness of accessibility.

I hope you will agree that the Ministry of Culture's Accessibility Plan demonstrates our commitment to a more accessible Ontario. Your thoughts about our plan are welcome, and I encourage you to share your comments with us.

Sincerely,

Caroline Di Cocco

Minister

Report on Achievements

2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Customer Service

Commitment:

The ministry will review all existing programs and activities, including eligibility criteria, and terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs, to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

In 2005-2006 templates were developed and distributed to program areas to facilitate program review. The Cultural Strategic Investment Fund and the Visiting Journalist Visiting Programmers Fund were reviewed. To address identified barriers, application forms in alternate formats will be made available.

In 2006-2007, the following programs will be reviewed using the template: Provincial Heritage Organization, Heritage Organization Development Grant, First Nations Library Development, Library Strategic Development Fund and Community Information Centres Pay Equity.

Commitment:

Ministry managers will capture staff and external stakeholder inquiries and suggestions in order to assess accessibility needs.

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

An accessibility survey document was developed for managers to capture the number and nature of accessibility-related inquiries received from staff and external stakeholders. The survey will be circulated in the fall of 2006 and results assessed by the Accessibility Planning Team.

Rationale:

In 2005-2006 implementation of this item was deferred in favour of other priorities. It is anticipated that survey results will be assessed in the winter of 2006.

Employment

Commitment:

The ministry will ensure that the Ministry of Government Services' new

Accessible Procurement E-module Training Tool (online) is reviewed by all procurement managers and staff. As well, procurement accessibility activities from previous years will be maintained and reviewed, to ensure they continue to be accessible and to find new areas of improvement to identify and remove barriers, i.e. procurement guidelines, communications.

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

The link to the Accessible Procurement E-module Training Tool, on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website, will be forwarded to all procurement managers and staff. This will be completed by September 2006.

Rationale:

There will be follow-up reviews in 2006-2007 to track completion of the E-module training by existing and new procurement managers and staff.

Commitment:

Human Resources-related accessibility activities from previous years will be maintained and reviewed to ensure they continue to be accessible and to find new areas of improvement to identify and remove barriers, i.e., job descriptions, staff orientation, accessibility accommodation.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

The following activities were completed in 2005-2006: 1) a standard clause was inserted in offer of employment letters, asking employees to notify their manager if they have accessibility needs. This clause was included in offer letters beginning in January 2006; 2) the staff orientation website was updated to include an HR open web link to employment accommodation Q's & A's. The link was added to the orientation website in February 2006; 3) In January 2006 an email was sent to managers reminding them to complete the ODA online training; 4) A manager training checklist is under development.

Reports to the Accessibility Planning Team on identified barriers are provided throughout the year and will continue.

Rationale:

The Human Resources Branch is currently in the process of gathering manager training information for the checklist.

Commitment:

The ministry will maintain and continue to strengthen the role of the Accessibility Planning Team.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

Implementation momentum in 2005-06 was maintained by establishment of regular monthly meetings of the Accessibility Planning Team and adoption of Sharepoint to facilitate online collaboration. As vacancies on the Team were created through staff turnover, these were filled promptly. The Team assessed the degree to which a commitment to accessibility is integrated into ministry business under Performance Development and Learning Plans and Operational Plans. In 2006-07 steps will be taken to better integrate accessibility into ministry operations.

Commitment:

Program and policy-related accessibility activities from previous years will be maintained and reviewed to ensure they continue to be accessible and to find new areas of improvement to identify and remove barriers, e.g., ministry accessibility policy; programs and services; mechanism to review new programs and policies to be accessible; accessibility issues addressed in Results Based Planning process; and submissions to central agencies.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

Discussion on the viability of embedding accessibility in the ministry's

Results Based Planning process was initiated.

Ministry of Culture Internet and Intranet sites now contain updated accessibility information and are reviewed periodically to ensure that they conform to accessibility standards.

Rationale:

These review processes will ensure that all existing and future policies, programs and Results Based Planning take into consideration the ODA. Reports on identified barriers will be discussed at the Team level and addressed throughout 2006-2007.

Commitment:

The ministry will assess, investigate and continue to communicate the availability of adaptive technologies and accessible website design to encourage their use.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

A member of the Accessibility Planning Team is dedicated to this task. For example, in 2005-06 a key corporate Website was reviewed and recommendations for further improvement provided. Periodic reports on new technologies such as a leading edge portable scanner/reader for the visually impaired, are provided.

Commitment:

The ministry will conduct staff surveys to determine the level of staff awareness of accessibility issues and to develop appropriate training.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

A staff survey was developed and approved by the Accessibility Planning Team to be used to assess training modalities in 2006-2007.

Rationale:

Survey was deferred until fall 2006 to ensure maximum staff response.

Commitment:

To assist in maintaining the ministry's good record for workplace accidents and addressing workplace ergonomic needs, the Accessibility Planning Team will also explore developing health and safety matters, including with Joint Health & Safety Committees, to reduce the possibility of injuries and illness on the job that could lead to temporary and permanent disabilities, and so promote employee physical and mental health.

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

This item was discussed at the Ministry of Culture Joint Health and Safety Committee table. The Human Resources Branch has been identified as the lead agency to address staff requests related to ergonomic needs, working in collaboration with other entities as appropriate.

Communications and Information

Commitment:

Communications-related activities from previous years will be maintained and reviewed, to ensure they continue to be accessible and to find new areas of improvement to identify and remove barriers, e.g. Internet content, Publications Ontario, TTY service, 1-800 service, website links, the list of interpreters and signers, opportunities for staff identification of barriers, and intranet.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

An annual reporting schedule was established to inform the Accessibility Planning Team on the status of internet content, Publications Ontario documents, TTY service, 1-800 service, website links and interpreter and signer status. The number of requests for

alternate formats will be reported quarterly.

Commitment:

The ministry will work with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to learn about best practices, resources, existing materials and education tools and communicate them in an Awareness and Education Campaign to staff and key industry partners/stakeholders, for the purpose of increasing accessibility knowledge and awareness, and for use in the provision of services.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry Accessibility Planning Team continues to promote accessibility-related resources. For instance, libraries and heritage sector stakeholders (445 municipal clerks) were made aware of resources available through the Paths to Equal Opportunity Website and other ministry program areas are undertaking similar initiatives.

Commitment:

The ministry will update its agencies on new or changed regulations and standards relating to their obligations under accessibility legislation. The ministry will also encourage agencies to include accessibility in their programs and practices in regards to good business practices, especially those agencies dealing with the public.

Status: Ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

Agencies are aware of accessibility obligations and the Accessibility Planning Team will continue to update them on any new requirements, such as standards being developed under the AODA, as required.

Rationale:

Although the ODA does not apply to the Ministry of Culture's agencies, they comply or are making efforts to comply with ODA requirements.

Commitment:

The ministry will conduct a review of the content of its written materials to ensure that all references to accessibility information are up to date.

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit, five guides explaining the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA), Planning Act, Historic Places Initiative and related programs, was launched Feb 20, 2006. Prior to their release, Heritage Policy and Program Development staff conducted a review of the content to ensure that all accessibility references are up to date.

The following "Tool Kit" publications were reviewed:

- **Your Community, Your Heritage, Your Committee** - establishing / sustaining an effective municipal heritage committee
- **Heritage Property Evaluation** - listing, researching, evaluating cultural heritage property in Ontario communities
- **Designating Heritage Properties** - municipal designation of individual properties under the OHA
- **Heritage Conservation Districts** - district designation under the OHA
- **Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process** - cultural heritage and archaeology policies of the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2005

Heritage Operations staff reviewed the Community Museum Notes Online posted on the ministry website and identified which publications should be updated in respect of accessibility references and advice.

Rationale:

Further work will be undertaken in 2006-2007 in which remaining Toolkit documents will be considered. Materials identified that need rewriting will have a timeline set for completion and re-issue of the material.

Commitment:

Focus this year on activities and information gathering to expand awareness of intellectual, mental health and learning disabilities.

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

Two staff learning sessions are under development, with mental health organizations to provide speakers. Target for holding the sessions is fall 2006.

Rationale:

This commitment was deferred as a fall timeframe will enable a larger number of ministry staff to attend.

Built Environment

Commitment:

Every reasonable effort will be made to make existing and future ministry premises barrier free.

Status: Ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry has reviewed and removed the main barriers to accessibility in its offices.

Ministry offices have accessible ramps, designated parking areas and barrier-free drop-off zones, including parking levels with elevators, height clearance for vans, wide parking spaces; barrier-free interior features, including corridors wide enough to allow wheelchair or scooter users, slip resistant surfaces, uncluttered pathways, and slip-free stairs with rails.

There are no major impediments to the overall satisfactory use of ministry offices by either staff or visitors.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Statutes or regulations currently under review or new ones proposed to go forward will have issues of accessibility and the identification of barriers included in the review process.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

The following regulations were reviewed during the 2005-2006 planning year.

O. Reg. 8/2006 - This regulation, made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, sets out the rules relating to licenses for archaeologists. It revokes Regulation 881. No barriers were identified in this regulation.

O. Reg. 9/2006 - This regulation, made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, sets out the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest of provincial significance for the purposes of clause 29 (1)(a) of the Act. No barriers were identified in this regulation.

O. Reg. 10/2006 - This regulation, made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, sets out the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest of provincial significance for the purposes of clause 34.5(1)(a) of the Act. No barriers were identified in this regulation.

O. Reg. 11/2006 - This regulation, made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, deals with marine archaeological sites. No barriers were identified in this regulation.

Legislation:

Bill 190 - Bill 190 is the proposed Good Government Act, 2005. Schedule H, dealing with Ministry of Culture legislation proposes to amend two statutes as follows:

- *Tartan Act, 2000*: The schedule to this act is amended to correct the description of a block of colour in the tartan of the Province of Ontario.
- *Royal Ontario Museum Act*: The act is amended to change the

fiscal year of the Museum.

No barriers in the proposed amendments were identified.

Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act

Section 11 of the Act makes technical amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act*. No barriers in the proposed amendments were identified.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Culture was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing, its commitments described in the accessibility plans it issued before 2005 - 2006.

Commitment:

In 2003-2004 the ministry committed to assist managers to comply with accessibility requirements in all procurement activities (as required under section 5 of the ODA). Staff with responsibility for procurement were to receive the "Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001" prepared by Management Board Secretariat.

Status: Completed

Action:

The above guidelines are now available online via the Accessible Procurement E-module Training Tool on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website. The link to this training resource has been forwarded to all procurement managers and staff.

Timeframe:

Follow-up will be undertaken in 2006-2007 to track completion of the E-module Training Tool.

Commitment:

In 2003-2004 the ministry committed to establishing a process to review acts and regulations for the use of language with respect to people with disabilities, and identify programs that may impact people with disabilities.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action:

All existing statutes and regulations were reviewed for accessibility issues in 2004-2005 and this work continues in each new planning year. In addition, draft statutes and regulations are now reviewed for any accessibility implications.

Timeframe:

Review of existing and draft legislation and regulations will continue through 2006-2007.

Commitments - Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Customer service

- New front-line staff will be made aware of accessibility requirements.
- Staff will be made aware of possible forthcoming requests for ministry publications in alternative formats.
- As physical space is reconfigured, the Accessibility Planning Team will review any modifications to ensure that accessibility is not being compromised.

Employment

- The Human Resources Branch will continue to review its practices and support materials, such as the newly-implemented pre-interview checklist for managers, to ensure that all reasonable efforts are being made to accommodate candidates' needs.

Communications and information

- The ministry will continue to review websites and newly-developed publications to ensure that they either meet or exceed accessibility requirements.

Built environment

- The search for new office space, if any, will give consideration to the accessibility features of potential properties.

Acts and regulations

- The Legal Services Branch works to ensure that issues of accessibility are addressed as an integral part of policy development for proposed legislation and regulations and will continue to do so.

Commitments - Barriers to be Addressed

This section represents the Ministry of Culture's plan, including new commitments and initiatives, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. September 30, 2006 is the public release date for all organizations with obligations to prepare and make public accessibility plans under the ODA, 2001.

Customer service

Barrier:

Policies, programs and services preventing people with disabilities from fully participating in customer service activities.

Commitment:

The Ministry of Culture will continue to review policies and programs to ensure that they give due consideration to accessibility needs in the area of customer service. The ministry will create a template (checklist) to ensure that existing policies, programs and activities are developed and delivered in a fashion consistent with ODA requirements.

Responsibility:

Accessibility Planning Team

Timeline:

The Accessibility Planning Team will create a template of the items that need to be checked for each policy, program and service, with an implementation target of fall 2006.

The Accessibility Planning Team will create a list of all policies, programs and services in the Ministry of Culture to be reviewed by December 2006 and post it on the Team Sharepoint site for periodic update as reviews are completed.

Employment accommodation

Barrier:

Managers and staff, including new members of the ministry, responsible for or engaged in the procurement of office equipment need to be made more aware of accessibility requirements.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to ensure that the new Ministry of Government Services Accessible Procurement E-module Training Tool (online) for the procurement provisions of the ODA is reviewed by all procurement managers and staff.

Responsibility:

Accessibility Planning Team

Timeline:

The link to the Accessible Procurement E-module Training Tool, on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website was forwarded to all procurement managers and staff. Existing and new procurement managers and staff will conduct follow-up reviews in 2006-2007 to track completion of the E-module training.

Barrier:

New managers require training to address employee accommodation and accessibility needs.

Commitment:

The Human Resources Branch will continue activities to increase accessibility for employees and to identify and remove barriers. They will develop a list of recommended training modules for new managers that will include the ODA online training and Injury, Illness and Employment Accommodation training and post it on the Human Resources website.

Responsibility:

Human Resources Branch

Timeline:

New manager training module development will begin in 2006-2007.

Communications and information

Barrier:

Ministry stakeholders may not be aware of accessibility requirements, resources and tools and of new developments affecting them, such as

draft standards under the AODA.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to update its stakeholders about changes to statutes, regulations and standards and all matters of interest related to accessibility. The ministry will continue to encourage stakeholders to include accessibility in their programs and practices and to disseminate information about accessibility tools and resources.

Responsibility:

Accessibility Planning Team

Timeline:

Ongoing

Built environment

Barrier:

There is a risk that changes to the physical work environment may introduce new barriers.

Commitment:

Every reasonable effort will continue to make existing and future ministry premises barrier free. The Accessibility Planning Team will monitor completed accessibility commitments and continue its ongoing review of any adaptations or changes to the physical work environment.

Responsibility:

Corporate Services Branch

Timeline:

Ongoing

Acts and regulations

Barrier:

There is a risk that proposed statutes or regulations may introduce new barriers.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to review draft statutes and regulations to ensure consistency with accessibility requirements. Every effort will be made to ensure that accessibility obligations are borne in mind as early as possible in the development of statutes and regulations (e.g. policy development).

Responsibility:

Legal Services Branch

Timeline:

Ongoing

For More Information

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

Please phone:

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416-212-7505

james.hamilton@ontario.ca

General inquiry number: 416-212-0644

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1-800 number: 1-866- 454-0049 (local conversion number: 416-325-8758)

E-mail: info.mcl@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: <http://www.culture.gov.on.ca>

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/>. 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:

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