

Ministry of Culture 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In 2001, there were an estimated 1.5 million people in Ontario with self-disclosed disabilities. This number is expected to increase as the population ages.

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities, and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make programs, services and buildings more accessible to

people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

In the Speech from the Throne, delivered on November 20, 2003, the Ontario Government confirmed its commitment to working with Ontarians with disabilities on meaningful legislation that will allow them to fully participate in building a stronger province.

This document is the first annual accessibility plan for the Ministry of Culture. The plan describes improvements to accessibility that the ministry has made to date and its commitments for the balance of the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

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Report on Achievements

Ministry of Culture (MCL):

The ministry established the Accessibility Planning Team with a wide ministry representation to get staff input and comments.

The ministry's Accessibility Planning Team has consulted with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to identify synergies and to undertake joint initiatives to increase accessibility awareness of its staff and key industry partners.

The ministry, in consultation with Publications Ontario, has developed procedures to provide its publications in accessible formats, upon request.

Ministry managers and supervisors have completed training in fulfilling the Government's obligations to accommodate the accessibility needs of its employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

MCL - Regional Services

In 2000, an industry committee created a training and resource guide, "Guest Services Kit," for use in communities. The informal resource and readiness kit provides information and workshops on how to

accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

The kit has been shared with community partners across the province.

In addition, the regional services branch conducted internal training to raise the awareness and education of the staff pertaining to accessibility.

MCL – Libraries

In 1986, the ministry published *Building Libraries: Guidelines for the Planning and Design of Public Library Buildings*, which highlights barrier-free access as key to good public library design and building implementation. This publication is still in use and up to date.

In 1989, the Ministry published *Special Formats Material*, a directory “intended to assist public libraries in Ontario to obtain format materials that would be of use to disabled library patrons.”

The Libraries Unit has placed a high priority on work to accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities through public library capital projects (Cultural Facilities Improvement Program of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Canada Ontario Infrastructure Works of the mid 1990s, and the more recently Sport, Culture and Tourism Partnerships-SuperBuild. A substantial percentage of public library capital projects supported by the Ministry focused on access improvements (ramps, automatic doors and elevators). All new buildings, including multi-purpose buildings, have been recommended and approved with plans that include access enhancements for people with disabilities.

Provincial funding has supported adaptive technology centres at the Toronto Reference Library and Hamilton Public Library, and special materials for deaf and blind children at the Oakville Public Library.

99 per cent of Ontario’s public library branches and service points provide public Internet access. The Gates Library Initiative (1998-1999) that helped achieve this Internet access stipulated that all public Internet access and public computing equipment must be accessible for persons with print disabilities (large font and large print software and capabilities).

In 2002, the Libraries Unit worked with the Ministry of Citizenship to develop and distribute ODA questions and answers for public libraries,

and assist public library clients with ODA issues.

The MCL libraries section of the website was accessible effective December 2002; the Libraries Unit is currently working to develop accessible Annual Public Library Surveys for the website.

The Libraries Unit participated in three public library conferences and meetings on the ODA in June 2003.

The Ministry works with the public library community to update "Ontario Public Library Guidelines" and provides assistance for Guidelines publication and translation. Guidelines include recommended accessibility standards covering items from public library facilities, layout and collections to telecommunications, marketing and Accessibility Plans.

SuperBuild Sport, Culture and Tourism Partnership Secretariat (SCTP)

The Program ensures that SCTP projects funded by the province and the federal government are accessible.

Accessibility is ensured through the following provision in the SCTP Funding Agreement:

[Article XIV, Paragraph 63] Covenants, representations and warranties. The Recipient covenants, represents and warrants to the Ministry that:

(c) It has or will apply for all permits, approvals, licenses which are required in order to carry out the Project including, but not limited to, any approvals lawfully required under the Planning Act (Ontario), the Building Code Act (Ontario), the Highway Traffic Act (Ontario), the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (Ontario), the Bridges Act (Ontario) and the Environmental Laws;

Some examples of current SCTP projects that address access for people with disabilities are the Church Street Project in Aurora, Peel Heritage Centre in Brampton and the Elmville Library in Midhurst.

MCL – Museums

Museum accessibility standards were revised in 2000 and publications updated to meet general ODA requirements.

MCL provided advisory services to clients on SuperBuild projects, training and workshops through museum associations and cultural field services.

Also, another focus was to ensure that operating grant guidelines correspond with health and safety standards.

MCL Corporate Communications Branch

MCL Internet site has been made accessible to people with disabilities as of December 31, 2002.

In addition, procedures were developed to provide Ministry publications (i.e. studies and reports) in accessible formats through Publications Ontario, upon request.

MCL - Culture Agencies Unit

The ministry's cultural attraction agencies, the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Royal Botanical Gardens, Ontario Science Centre and Science North are all wheelchair accessible facilities.

From April 1999 to March 2003, the Trillium Foundation approved 506 grants to assist people with disabilities.

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Commitments and Strategies for 2003-2004

As part of the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the Ministry of Culture established the "Accessibility Planning Working Group."

The Accessibility Planning Team consulted with all parts of the ministry

to report on accomplishments, brainstorm, and propose actions to be taken to remove barriers through an “Awareness and Education Campaign” with various activities as follows:

- Accessibility information sessions and workshops;
- “Lunch and learn” group activities;
- Branch and regional services staff meetings;
- Accessibility Planning Team’s presentations; and,
- Use of the ministry’s intranet web site.

The ministry, through the Accessibility Planning Team and various activities, will get staff input on the identification of barriers on an on-going basis.

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Methods to be taken to prevent new barriers

Operational plans will document how planned activities will take into account the potential effect of those activities on people with disabilities. As well, the ministry will develop a framework for reviewing acts and regulations.

The ministry will commit to maintain the Accessibility Planning Team and ensure a position is created for a person with a disability (or as an alternative work with an outside stakeholder representing persons with disabilities).

The ministry, through the Accessibility Planning Team and various activities, will ensure that all staff provides input on the identification of barriers on an ongoing basis.

The ministry will continue to provide its Web content in accessible formats.

The ministry will continue to work closely with Publications Ontario to provide Ministry publications in accessible formats as requested.

As part of the new managers orientation, managers will complete the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* training.

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Business areas to be reviewed

Acts & Regulations

Acts Review Process

Will establish the process to review ministry acts and regulations for the use of language with respect to people with disabilities, and identify programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

Procurement

Will implement new guidelines to ensure consideration of accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA (when distributed by Management Board Secretariat).

Policies and Programs

Human Resources

Will review the employee orientation guide to ensure new employees have the most current information on the ODA and resources such as the “Accessability/Accessibilité” CD ROM training tool

Will review job descriptions for language and content that respects persons with disabilities and that accessibility awareness is incorporated (i.e. frontline workers, Web Coordinator).

Grant Programs

Will review the eligibility criteria, terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities (SCTP Funding Agreement could serve as a model).

Practices and Services

Information Services

In consultation with Management Board Secretariat, will review if there is an approved list of interpreters and signers for use at government sponsored meetings and events or conference.

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Actions to be taken

Business Planning

Will incorporate accessibility initiatives requiring funding allocation into the business planning process.

Communications

Will use both the Internet and Intranet websites to promote that government publications are available in accessible formats through Publications Ontario and will provide the toll free number.

Partnerships

Will consult/work with the Seniors Secretariat to receive information on trends, prepare and respond to the increase in aging population as it pertains to the Accessibility Planning. Will continue to consult with the Accessibility Directorate on the consistency and clarity of ODA messaging on the ministry's Internet

Will work with the Accessibility Directorate to share best practices, resources, existing materials and education tools to raise the general

awareness of staff and key industry partners.

Will continue to work with Publications Ontario on providing government publications in a variety of formats.

Education and Awareness

Will plan, manage, and implement an overall “Awareness and Education Campaign” to increase the knowledge of staff on accessibility issues and to share best practices for the provision of services to employees, clients and stakeholders with disabilities. The campaign will be undertaken through various activities (information sessions and workshops, “lunch and learn” group activities, branch and regional staff meetings, accessibility Planning Team’s presentations, and the use of the ministry’s intranet website).

Will track and assess, through surveys, the overall ministry learning needs while measuring the level of awareness.

Will report performance measures pertaining to awareness and education as part of the accessibility plans.

Will encourage regional staff and front-line staff to promote accessibility by sharing best practises with regional industry partners.

Improved accessibility of facilities

Will undertake an internal audit and site inspection to review ministry facilities (washrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, workstations) to identify areas that do not meet accessibility requirements and work with the Ontario Realty Corporation to rectify the situation.

Improved Accessibility in Technology

Will deliver information session to share tools, resources, best practices and guidelines about adaptive technologies and accessible website design to employees for use when preparing content for external and internal websites (as part of the “Awareness and Education Campaign”).

Cultural Agencies

The Cultural Agencies Unit, as part of the consultations led by the Accessibility Directorate, will continue to communicate with its agencies to provide updates and current status on the development of the regulations relating to the obligations of agencies under the ODA.

Procurement of Goods and services

Ministry program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on having regard to accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA. All staff with responsibility for procurement will receive the "Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act," once distributed by MBS.

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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) 212-0644

E-mail: General_Info@mcl.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship's Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

[Download a copy of this plan \(Microsoft Word format\).](#)

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

[Publications Ontario](#)

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