

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

*2004-2005
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

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 policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Ministry of Culture. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister



As Minister of Culture for the Government of Ontario, I am pleased to share with you my ministry's 2004-05 Accessibility Plan.

The Ministry of Culture's Accessibility Plan details the commitments of my ministry to improve accessibility to our services for persons with disabilities. We have realized some significant achievements so far, but we are very much aware of the need to direct even more energy to improved accessibility in order to ensure that we are delivering real, positive change. The plan reveals this ministry's dedication to supporting the government's commitment to strong, accessible communities across Ontario.

This fall, our government will introduce changes that will make the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) more effective. Together with all Ontarians, we are working to create secure and liveable communities that feature a high quality of life and full participation by Ontarians of diverse abilities.

Members of the Ontario Public Service have demonstrated their commitment to accessibility. As Minister of Culture, I am pleased that my ministry continues to build on successes and achievements to date and to strive toward becoming a more accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'm meilleur'. The script is fluid and cursive.

Madeleine Meilleur
Minister

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004 Planning Commitments

Commitment:

Operational plans will document how planned activities will take into account the potential effect of those activities on people with disabilities.

Status: Completed.

Accessibility was incorporated into the ministry's 2003-2004 operational planning instructions, as well as the 2004-05 instructions. In both years, accessibility planning was identified as a corporate priority that should be considered. As well, the operational planning templates contained a special note to the effect that "operational plans should reflect the ministry's commitment to continuously improve the accessibility of programs and services to people with disabilities." Accessibility will continue to be incorporated in future years' operational and business plans.

Commitment:

The ministry will incorporate accessibility initiatives requiring funding allocation into the results based planning process.

Status: Completed.

This is completed and ongoing. Ministry funding has been realigned and refocused to best meet government priorities and associated key results. Where possible, accessibility issues have been considered, particularly in the capital planning area and the roll-out of new initiatives.

Commitment:

The ministry will consult with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat to respond to trends in the aging population pertaining to Accessibility Planning. The ministry will continue to consult with the Accessibility Directorate on the consistency and clarity of ODA messaging on the ministry's Internet.

Status: Completed.

This is completed and ongoing. As part of the development of the results based plan, the ministry included implications for the ministry of trends in the aging population, including accessibility. The information is collected from many sources.

Commitment:

The ministry will report performance measures pertaining to awareness and education as part of the accessibility plans.

Status: Deferred to 2004-2005.

Action and Timeframe:

New or strengthened performance measures will be established as part of the 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan.

Rationale:

The ministry was unable to finalize performance measures this year but will do so in 2004-2005.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

The Planning Team met to complete the Ministry Accessibility Plan for 2003-2004. A new Accessibility Planning Team has been established under a new Executive Lead. The team will meet monthly and will provide at least quarterly updates to the ministry Executive Committee.

Rationale:

The ministry is committed to strengthening the ongoing committee process and this has led to the establishment of a new results-based focus and structure for 2004-2005.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

Managers were trained to foster a positive environment and to serve as champions of the legislation. In addition, the ministry will develop a process to allow staff to provide input anonymously to the Accessibility Planning Team through the intranet on the identification of barriers.

Rationale:

Training will be extended and strengthened in 2004-2005.

Commitment: The ministry will continue to provide its Web contents in accessible formats.

Status: Completed.

This item is completed and ongoing. The ministry continues to work with both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible. The ministry will continue to ensure accessibility.

Commitment:

The ministry will use the intranet and Internet websites to promote availability of government publications in accessible formats through Publications Ontario and provide the toll free number.

Status: In progress.

Ministry websites are accessible and the ministry has provided a text-only version of every web page. The ministry is prepared to handle all requests for alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry has not advertised the availability of alternate formats on ministry sites, but will begin to do so in 2004-2005.

Rationale:

The advertising of the availability of alternate format publications on the website will be implemented in 2004-2005.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed.

This item is completed and ongoing. The ministry handles (and is prepared to handle) all requests for materials in alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Commitment:

New managers to complete accessibility training as part of their orientation.

Status: Ongoing.

There is a process in place to ensure that managers receive on-line training with respect to their responsibilities under the ODA (There is an accessibility training online module, which all managers and supervisors are required to take). The ministry will monitor the uptake of the training, particularly for newly appointed managers, and provide status updates when Management Board Secretariat resumes providing the information.

It is the responsibility of a hiring manager to inform newly appointed manager of the requirements of their position or assignment.

Action and Timeframe:

The Human Resources Branch will develop a resource and orientation checklist for persons newly appointed to managerial assignments, which will include the mandatory requirement for ODA training.

Rationale:

As part of updated orientation training, the ministry will inform new managers about the requirement to complete disability/accessibility training to further enhance the ministry's performance on this commitment.

Commitment:

The ministry will review the employee orientation guide to ensure new employees have the most current information on the ODA and resources such as the "Accountability/ Accountabilité" CD ROM training tool.

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

The Human Resources Branch is reviewing all of its human resource policies and practices, including staff recruitment, orientation, training, etc. As part of this review, the Human Resources Branch will be exploring options for incorporating accessibility into the ministry's orientation program for new staff.

Rationale:

Revised employee orientation guidelines will build on the results of the Human Resources Branch's review.

Commitment:

The ministry will review job descriptions for language and content that respects people with disabilities and that accessibility awareness is incorporated (e.g. frontline workers, Web coordinator).

Status: Completed.

As part of the regular hiring process, managers review job descriptions for accessibility awareness, and in keeping with the hiring policies of the Ontario Public Service as an Equal Opportunity Employer. The ministry will continue to work with the Accessibility Directorate in this ongoing review.

Commitment:

The ministry 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 regarding disability/accessibility issues.

Status: Completed.

This is completed and ongoing. The ministry worked with a wide range of staff, partners and stakeholders to share best practices, resources and education tools to raise awareness. Some examples include the development and delivery of training workshops for community museums that linked the requirements of the ODA to the Community Museum Operating Standards, and developed an accessibility guide for community museums to raise awareness and promote best practices. Also, the public library community received material and information sessions on improving access and awareness to meet their needs.

Commitment:

The ministry will plan, manage and implement an overall "Awareness and Education Campaign" to increase staff knowledge on accessibility issues and to share best practices for the provision of services to employees, clients and stakeholders with disabilities (e.g. lunch and learn, group activities, staff meetings, workshops, intranet websites).

Status: Completed.

This is completed and ongoing. The ministry worked with a wide range of staff, partners and stakeholders to share best practices, resources and education tools to raise awareness of accessibility issues.

Commitment:

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

Status:

Deferred due to development of transition plans, results-based plans and a ministry staff survey.

Action and Timeframe:

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will be conducting an employee survey to determine staff awareness of disability issues. Working in conjunction with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Culture will include questions on accessibility issues as part of the ministry's annual staff survey and will develop appropriate learning opportunities for staff.

Rationale:

The ministry will work with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to benefit from their experience in determining the appropriateness of questions, survey techniques and interpretation of results.

Commitment:

The ministry will encourage regional and front-line staff to promote accessibility by sharing best practices with regional industry partners.

Status: Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The Regional Services Branch provided sessions to staff to increase awareness of accessibility issues and access requirements and a session at the branch training forum in 2003 on how to assist municipalities develop accessibility plans.

Rationale:

Staff will continue to seek out new and innovative ways of communicating with clients and partners.

Commitment:

The ministry will deliver information sessions 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”).

Status: Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

A technology accessibility specialist has been appointed by the Technology and Business Solutions Branch and is providing specialized technical support to people with disabilities across the Community Services Information Technology Cluster. This individual will be appointed to the Accessibility Planning Team in 2004-2005.

Rationale:

The commitment is ongoing, because as technology and standards change, the ministry continues to update services.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to communicate with its agencies as part of the consultations to be led by the Accessibility Directorate to provide updates on the development of regulations relating to the obligations of agencies’ under the ODA.

Status: Completed.

The Culture Agencies Unit has provided information to agencies to prepare to meet ODA potential requirements and to promote the importance of accessibility. There have been no regulations naming agencies obligations to date.

In addition, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the ministry, provided funding, in fiscal year 2003-04, in the amount of \$11.5 million to 218 organizations that support people with disabilities.

Commitment:

The ministry will assist managers to comply with accessibility requirements in all procurement activities (as required under section 5 of the ODA). Staff with responsibility for procurement will receive the “Guidelines for Implementing the

Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001” prepared by Management Board Secretariat.

Status: In Progress

Action and Timeframe: Ongoing

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government’s recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency

Commitment:

The ministry will establish a process to review ministry acts and regulations for the use of language with respect to people with disabilities, and identify programs that may impact people with disabilities.

Status: Deferred to 2004-05.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry will use the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s framework to review existing acts and regulations and any acts and regulations being developed.

Rationale:

This approach will build on government best practices and will be undertaken in partnership with the Legal Services Branch.

Commitment:

The ministry will implement new guidelines to ensure consideration of accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA.

Status: In Progress

Action and Timeframe: Ongoing

Rationale: As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government’s

recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment:

The ministry will review eligibility criteria and the terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities (Sport, Culture and Tourism Partnership Funding Agreement could serve as a model).

Status: Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

Accessibility was given priority in funding programs. For example, the allocation of agency capital funding. With regard to museum grant applications, only those applications that met the museum operating standards (which include accessibility) were approved and funded.

Rationale:

The ministry will build on the experience of 2003-2004 in reviewing other grant programs in 2004-2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will review, in consultation with Management Board Secretariat, an approved list of interpreters and signers for use at government sponsored meeting and events.

Status: Completed.

This is completed and ongoing. The ministry's Communications Branch is maintaining the list. Interpreters and signers are provided upon request at ministry sponsored meetings and events.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration conducted an audit of all floors at 400 University and at all Regional Services offices. The audit included space occupied by the Ministry of Culture in these locations, except for London, Thunder Bay and Ottawa. All space occupied by the ministry at 400 University is ODA compliant. The bulk of the ministry's offices have been audited. The remaining offices will be audited in 2004-2005. Also, the Joint Health and Safety Committee regularly assesses accessibility issues when conducting inspections of the workplace.

Rationale:

The ministry will work with co-located ministries to conduct an audit of the remaining offices.

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

Legislative Requirements

Commitment:

The ministry will complete a review of all ministry facilities to identify areas that do not meet accessibility requirements. Every reasonable effort will be made to remove all identified barriers to ensure the premises are in compliance with the Ontario Building Code and barrier free. The ministry will implement the Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier Free Guidelines upon release.

Action:

The ministry will implement the Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Guidelines. It will partner with Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the Ontario Realty Corporation to ensure that all existing or future ministry facilities are barrier free. The premises at 400 University have been audited and are ODA compliant. The remaining offices will be audited. Any identified barriers will be removed such as redesigning work areas.

Timeframe: Conduct audit by Spring 2005 and take appropriate action as resources permit in 2004-2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will implement the new Management Board Secretariat guidelines for the procurement provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.

Action:

Formal processes and training will be communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Timeframe:

2004-2005

Commitment:

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

Action:

The ministry will work closely with both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible. This commitment will be ongoing. As technology and standards change the ministry will continue to ensure accessibility. The advertising of the availability of alternate format publications on the website will be implemented.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to work closely with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested, and to promote the availability of government publications in alternate formats.

Action:

The ministry will continue to respond to requests for materials in alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner. The ministry will actively promote the availability of ministry information in accessible formats through Publications Ontario.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will review job descriptions for language and content that respects people with disabilities, and which incorporates accessibility awareness.

Action:

Managers, with assistance from Human Resources Branch, will continue to review job descriptions for accessibility issues and consistency, and will work with the Accessibility Directorate to ensure that all accessibility concerns are addressed.

Timeframe: 2004 – 2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will strengthen the existing orientation for new staff by incorporating accessibility awareness in the orientation package. The ministry will also

develop a process to ensure that new managers complete disability/accessibility training.

Action:

The ministry will prepare an enhanced staff orientation package with a strong accessibility awareness component for all new staff. In addition, the ministry will organize training for all staff.

It is the responsibility of a hiring manager to inform a newly appointed manager of the requirements of their position or assignment. For the future, to assist hiring managers in this responsibility, the Human Resources Branch will develop a resource and orientation checklist for persons newly appointed to managerial assignments. This will include the mandatory requirement to take the accessibility on-line training.

The ministry will monitor the uptake of disability/accessibility training, particularly for newly appointed managers, and provide status updates when Management Board Secretariat resumes providing the information.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will maintain and strengthen the role of the Accessibility Planning Team, including a member with a self-disclosed disability or consult with a disabled person within the Ontario Public Service.

Action:

The ODA Accessibility Planning Team will be responsible for preparing, coordinating and implementing ODA annual accessibility plans and ensuring that results are achieved. The team will report on the status of activities and the achievement of results to the ministry Executive Committee at least quarterly. The team, through outreach, will actively recruit a team member who has knowledge of the legislation and its implementation either through the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration or other provincial ministry.

Timeframe: Beginning in 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

The ministry will review its acts and regulations to respond to accessibility needs.

Action:

The ministry will review legislation and regulations for which it is responsible to ensure that accessibility needs are addressed. The review framework developed by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration as a best practice will be used to conduct this review.

The ministry will take into account accessibility needs in the development of new legislation and regulations.

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

Policies

Commitment:

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

Action:

The ministry's grant programs and applications procedures will be reviewed for accessibility to ensure that no barriers exist to impede people with disabilities from accessing and applying for funding. The ministry will continue to provide and accept grant applications in alternate formats.

Legal Services Branch will be consulted to suggest provisions for re-drafting, if necessary.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry 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.

Action:

Working with stakeholders and the Accessibility Directorate, the ministry will continue to provide technical advice and support to develop and deliver training workshops for staff, orientation sessions, share best practices and resources among cultural and heritage stakeholders.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will develop and communicate to staff a policy that establishes an accessible workplace and accessible programs and services.

Action:

Working with staff, the ministry will develop a policy that will encourage all staff to work towards making the ministry an accessible workplace, and programs and services accessible. The policy will be communicated to staff as a part of the Awareness and Education Campaign.

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

Programs and Services

Commitment:

The ministry will provide a TTY service for public inquiries and communication with staff.

Action: The ministry will install a TTY service and provide appropriate training for staff to ensure quality customer service.

Timeframe: December 2004.

Commitment:

The ministry will provide a 1-800 telephone line for public inquiries and communication with staff.

Action: The ministry will install a 1-800 telephone line to enhance quality customer service.

Timeframe: November 2004.

Commitment:

The ministry will provide a link on its website to information to assist the public in obtaining information via TTY, 1-800 and in alternate formats.

Action: The ministry will develop a link and specialized information on its website.

Timeframe: January 2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will maintain a list of approved interpreters and signers for use at all ministry sponsored meeting and events.

Action: The list is maintained by the Communications Branch. Interpreters and signers will be provided upon request at ministry sponsored meetings and events.

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will ensure that all new and existing programs and activities are developed and delivered to meet ODA requirements.

Action:

Together with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Culture will provide staff with tools to ensure accessibility is a core consideration of program development and delivery.

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will encourage regional and front-line staff to promote accessibility by sharing best practices with regional industry partners.

Action:

Working with communities and stakeholders, staff will continue to actively promote accessibility by sharing information about best practices, workshops, training sessions and group presentations with our sector partners.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Practices

Commitment:

All reasonable measures will be taken to provide staff and job applicants with accommodations for disabilities upon request.

Action:

The ministry will provide accommodations for staff and job applicants with disabilities upon request.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Commitment:

Accessibility will be reflected in the ministry's planning guidelines, operational and results-based plans as a corporate priority.

Action:

The ministry's approved Results Based Plan requests and operational plans will incorporate specific provisions for addressing accessibility and compliance with the *ODA, 2001* as a corporate priority.

Timeframe: 2005-2006 and future years.

Commitment:

The ministry will provide opportunities for staff input on identification of barriers to the Accessibility Planning Team.

Action:

Training of staff and management to identify barriers will continue and be strengthened in 2004-2005. The team will coordinate input from staff which can be generated through staff meetings, lunch and learn sessions, special meetings on accessibility issues, etc. The ministry will also create an ODA section on the intranet that would have resources, links, questions and answers, and an anonymous feedback mechanism for identifying barriers and suggestions for removing them.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will actively promote the availability of adaptive technologies and accessible website design to appropriate employees, and encourage its use.

Action:

The ministry will take advantage of the services provided by the Technology Accessibility Specialist appointed by the Technology and Business Solutions Branch who is providing specialized technical support to people with disabilities across the Community Services Information Technology Cluster. This individual will be appointed to the Accessibility Planning Team.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to communicate with its agencies to provide status updates on the development of regulations relating to the obligations of agencies under the ODA. The ministry will also encourage agencies to include accessibility in their programs and practices.

Action:

Ministry staff will continue to promote accessibility, and provide information to agencies on the status of their obligations under the ODA (e.g. the status of regulations naming agencies).

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

Commitment:

The ministry will develop and report performance measures to address client satisfaction with accessibility improvements.

Action:

The ministry will develop new or strengthened performance measures, consistent with the Ontario Public Service Performance Measurement process, to determine the outcome of activities for accessibility improvements.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment:

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

Action:

Working in conjunction with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Culture will include questions on accessibility issues as part of the ministry's annual staff survey and will use this information to develop appropriate learning opportunities for staff. The ministry will benefit from the experience of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in conducting staff surveys of awareness to determine the appropriateness of questions and interpretation of results.

Timeframe: 2004-2005

Commitment:

The Accessibility Planning Team will plan and co-ordinate an overall "Awareness and Education Campaign" to increase staff knowledge on accessibility issues and to share best practices for the provision of services to employees, clients and stakeholders with disabilities.

Action:

The ministry will communicate the 2004-05 plan to staff, provide ODA training through group activities, staff meetings, workshops and provide information on the intranet websites.

Timeframe: 2004-2005.

For more information

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

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Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration'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.

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