

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

*2005-2006
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

The recent passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, marks a new era of accessibility in Ontario. This legislation will make Ontario one of the world leaders in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

While the government is moving forward to implement the new legislation, there will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other 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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 ensure real and effective change.

This document is the third annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Culture. It highlights achievements of the 2004-05 plan and outlines commitments for 2005-06 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 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



I am pleased that the Ontario legislature recently passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This important piece of legislation will help place our province at the forefront of the movement to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

In implementing this new legislation, the Government of Ontario is building on our past progress and achievements. In the priority areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment, we are working to lay the foundation for accessibility standards that will enable real and effective changes to benefit people with disabilities.

As Minister of Culture, I recognize how vital it is that ministry staff have a solid grasp of issues concerning people with disabilities and how important it is that our ministry's programs and services not present barriers to the active participation of people with disabilities. This is why, in 2004-05, we launched the Accessibility Planning section of the ministry's Intranet site, which was developed jointly with the Ministry of Tourism to communicate consistent and accurate accessibility information to staff. Serving as a major internal communications tool on accessibility matters, this website provides information on ministry accessibility plans, commitments, announcements, policies, and initiatives, as well as linking to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's website for corporate information. It has been designed to increase staff knowledge and awareness of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, and accessibility issues. Through the intranet site, our ministry is committed to informing and increasing staff awareness of accessibility issues.

The Ministry of Culture is pleased to be an important part of the government's initiative to ensure that everyone in Ontario can achieve their potential and participate fully and actively in our society. My ministry will continue to work hard to implement initiatives in support of our government's commitment and efforts to make Ontario a province that is inclusive and accessible for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "m meilleur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Madeleine Meilleur
Minister

Report on Achievements of 2004-2005 Planning Commitments

The Ministry of Culture was successful in achieving its planned commitments outlined in its 2004-05 accessibility plan. September 30, 2004 was the public release date for all organizations with obligations to prepare and make public accessibility plans under the ODA, 2001. The following section provides a status report of ministry achievements in helping the government achieve its goal of a more accessible Ontario.

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 (ORC) *Barrier-Free Guidelines* upon release.

Status: In progress

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) commenced accessibility audits for all its premises in 2004. Accessibility audits have been completed for all MCL premises located at Whitney Block, Ferguson Block, and 400 University Avenue. Follow-up audits have been done for MCI Regional Offices. This includes all related public spaces and the premises shared by MCI with MTR and MCL. The checklist for the audit involved all items set out in ORC's *Barrier-Free Guidelines*.

Action and Timeframe:

Audit results are being reviewed and proposals are being considered to address identified barriers for inclusion in next year's plan.

Rationale:

This is an on-going process that commenced with a spring 2004 accessibility audit and continued with a follow-up audit of ministry facilities in spring 2005.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

Managers and staff responsible for procurement were informed of their responsibilities by the Deputy Minister when the guidelines were released in fall 2004.

Procurement guidelines have also been communicated to staff by placing a link on the ministry's new Intranet website.

Action and Timeframe:

Follow-up will be done with procurement managers and staff in 2005-06, to ensure they use MBS' new on-line E-Module Training Tool.

Rationale:

MBS recently released their E-module training tool to help ministries implement the procurement guidelines (previously released by MBS in August, 2004) in order to implement s.5 of the ODA, 2001, dealing with the duty to procure goods and services that are accessible for employees and the public.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The ministry continues to work with both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible.

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.

Status: Completed

The ministry will continue to be prepared to handle requests for publications in alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Commitment

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

Status: Completed

Human Resources (HR) continues to review all new job descriptions for language and content that respects people with disabilities.

Existing job descriptions are reviewed by HR and updated as necessary (e.g., whenever there is a change in status, arising from activities such as the recruitment process, re-organization, etc.).

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.

Status: Completed

The ministry has enhanced our staff orientation package located on the HR website, through the incorporation of accessibility awareness links that present a strong accessibility awareness component.

Information on accessibility issues, updated to reflect new accessibility legislation, was also included in orientation sessions for new staff.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The Accessibility Planning Team has been strengthened with broad representation from across all sections of the ministry. The team meets regularly and provides frequent updates to the Ministry Executive Committee on the status of commitment implementation.

The ministry was very successful in recruiting six new members to the planning team as a result of the Deputy Minister's all-staff memo inviting person(s) who have a particular interest in accessibility issues to join the planning team.

Acts and Regulations***Commitment:***

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

Status: Completed***Action and Timeframe:***

The ministry completed a review of acts and regulations for the purpose of identifying barriers to, among other things, rights and obligations, as well as benefits and requirements, based upon a review template prepared for MCI. A separate legislative review sub-group was formed to conduct the review.

Ministry acts and regulations, including agencies' statutes, were reviewed for language which created barriers. The legislative review sub-group reported that, to the best of their knowledge, no significant barriers exist in the language of the

statutes for which MCL has responsibility. The review included acts and regulations of:

- *Art Gallery of Ontario Act*
- *Arts Council Act*
- *Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, 2001*
- *Centennial Centre of Science and Technology Act*
- *Corporations Act, Regulation 389/95*
- *Development Corporations Act Ontario, 672/00 as amended*
- *Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Act*
- *George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art Act*
- *German Pioneers Day Act, 2000*
- *Hummingbird Performing Arts Centre Corporation Act, 1998*
- *Irish Heritage Day Act, 2004*
- *McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act*
- *Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act insofar as it relates to programs and activities respecting culture*
- *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Public Libraries Act*
- *Royal Botanical Gardens Act*
- *Royal Ontario Museum Act*
- *Science North Act*
- *South Asian Heritage Act, 2001*
- *Tartan Act, 2000*
- *United Empire Loyalists' Day Act, 1997.*

In the process of reviewing the *Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Act*, the ministry identified a potential barrier for people with visual impairments to access notices of the Minister's declaration that are required to be published in the *Ontario Gazette*. MCL will be working with the Ministry of Government Services in the coming year to address this issue.

Policies

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

A sub-group has been established to conduct a review of the ministry's grant programs and applications procedures to ensure that no barriers exist to impede people with disabilities from accessing and applying for funding.

The sub-group has met and decided to use the review framework developed by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to conduct the review.

Rationale:

The review work proved to be larger in volume than expected and so future targets are being established to be more achievable.

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.

Status: Completed

The ministry is continuing its efforts to raise accessibility awareness with staff and key industry partners. For example, ministry staff provided a Provincial Update in February 2005 at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference to an audience of 40 in which accessibility issues and the new legislation were addressed as part of the report to Ontario library staff, CEOs and trustees.

Ministry staff also covered the ODA / AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005) for northern Ontario library staff and board members, at the Ontario Library Service-North Library Conference Plenary session in Sault Ste Marie in May 2005.

Every ministry branch/unit received a standard presentation followed by discussion of ODA legislation and accessibility issues, led by team members.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The ministry has approved the adoption of a MCL Accessibility Policy, developed by the Planning Team, of an accessible workplace and accessible programs and services for the ministry.

This policy has been communicated to staff via a link from the new ministry accessibility intranet website. Efforts will continue to be made to communicate this policy to staff through other media.

Programs and Services***Commitment:***

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

Status: Completed

The ministry has installed a TTY service which has been operational as of June 2005. The service operates out of the Deputy Minister's Office and the TTY number is: 416-325-5170.

Appropriate staff have been trained to use the service and ensure quality customer service.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The ministry has provided a 1-800 telephone line to enhance quality customer service. The 1-800 number is 1-866-454-0049 and the local Conversion Number is 416-325-8758. This 1-800 number is operational and posted on the website since March 2005.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The TTY and 1-800 numbers have been posted on INFO-GO, the Internet and other places where MCL numbers are listed, and a link to Accessibility Planning is provided on the MCL website.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The Communications Branch maintains a list of interpreters and signers that are available for use on request at ministry sponsored meetings and events. The list is updated once per year.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry has put in place mechanisms to remind staff to ensure that all new programs/policies are developed to be accessible.

One example of this is the new Minister's Advisory Council on Arts and Culture (MACAC) website and online survey on the Status of the Artist launched in early May 2005, which has been reviewed for accessibility.

Both the website and the online survey were reviewed by the ministry's IT Branch for accessibility prior to launch, and both incorporate features designed to increase usability for individuals who are using accessibility tools, such as screen readers. The ministry has sought Publications Ontario's advice to ensure that the website documents can be transformed into the appropriate accessible format, as necessary.

Users are also invited to contact the ministry if they need assistance, or are unable to complete the survey online for any reason.

To date, over 3,000 artists and organizations have completed the online survey.

A sub-group of the Accessibility Planning Team has been set up to review existing programs and activities for accessibility. Results will be implemented in 2005-06.

Rationale:

The review work proved to be larger in volume than expected and so future targets are being established to be more achievable. A methodology developed by MCI to do similar reviews is being adopted for use by MCL.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Regional Services Branch staff are involved in providing numerous training and information sessions to organizations and municipalities, delivering workshops, providing advice on ODA issues and the Act, sharing information and best practices, and providing resource material with sector partners.

Practices

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Ministry assistance will continue to be provided to job applicants, when requested.

MCI has developed a tip sheet/best practices page on accommodations to include in hiring managers' recruitment packages. The tip sheet was reviewed by some MCL managers and is now available for ministry-wide use.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Accessibility planning has been included as a corporate priority in the ministry's 2005-06 Results Based Plan (RBP).

Members of the ministry's senior management team will be reminded to ensure activity notes submitted for the 2006-07 RBP will include any accessibility issues related to the content of that note. Corporate Resources Branch will continue to remind program areas to address any accessibility issues when commenting on submissions to central agencies.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Staff are encouraged to address barriers that they encounter, whether the barriers are encountered in their role as a staff member or in serving the public. As a first step, staff are encouraged to speak to their director/manager.

This process was conveyed to all management and staff by team members at individual branch/unit staff meetings. Staff were encouraged, at meetings, to bring any concerns about personal barriers in the workplace directly to their managers to have them addressed. A standard power point ODA slide deck was used for the presentations. The result is that management and staff now have a better understanding of the process available to them under ministry acts and programs with respect to accessibility issues.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

The Technology Accessibility Specialist is a member of the Accessibility Planning Team. He has agreed to suggest ways of actively promoting the availability of his services to ministry staff and clients.

The specialist has reviewed ministry material for accessibility prior its release to staff and has made suggestions to take advantage of current advancements in adaptive technology.

Corporate Resources advises that a central fund for adaptive technologies has been established to reimburse branches for the cost of accommodations for accessibility requirements.

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.

Status: Completed

New information on accessibility was communicated to agencies on an ongoing basis.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

This commitment will be combined with the next commitment in this report regarding staff surveys.

Action and Timeframe:

Work this year has identified a greater need for measurement and analysis of accessibility issues within MCL. The ministry has decided to develop performance measures of satisfaction with accessibility improvements by first focusing on awareness. Measurement of awareness will be included in the staff survey to be conducted in 2005-06. Data collected from the survey will be used to establish baselines for 2005-06.

Rationale:

It is believed that before there can be any meaningful measures of satisfaction, that emphasis should be placed on raising awareness of accessibility issues among staff. Hence performance measurement in the first years should measure awareness and is better built into the staff survey.

Commitment:

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

Status: In progress

Action and Timeframe:

A sub-group of the Planning Team has developed a draft staff survey to determine the level of staff awareness of accessibility issues. Decisions on the survey format, wording of questions, staff coverage, and survey methodology are currently being discussed among the larger group and are expected to be resolved in 2005-06.

Rationale:

Discussions on survey format have proven complex and are ongoing.

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.

Status: Completed

The ministry has undertaken a number of steps to raise staff knowledge of the ODA and increase awareness of accessibility issues.

For example, the ministry developed an intranet site jointly with the then Ministry of Tourism and Recreation dedicated exclusively to accessibility issues.

The Deputy Minister sent a copy of the 2004-05 accessibility plan to all staff with a cover letter encouraging staff to become knowledgeable of the contents and participate in its implementation.

Accessibility Planning Team members presented the ministry plan and led discussions on ODA issues at branch/unit staff meetings. A standard presentation was developed. Discussions were held across the ministry. Team members keep management and staff of their respective branch/units informed about accessibility issues.

Commitments and Strategies for 2005-2006

This section represents the ministry's plan, including new commitments and initiatives for the coming year. September 30, 2005 is the public release date for all organizations with obligations to prepare and make public accessibility plans under the ODA, 2001.

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.

Action:

A sub-group will conduct a review of the ministry's programs and activities, including grant programs, along with applications and procedures, for accessibility by using the review framework developed by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. From the review, an implementation plan will be developed to address any barriers that are found within these programs and activities or barriers which impede people with disabilities from accessing and applying for funding.

Timeframe:

The review will be completed in stages. In 2005-06, these programs will be reviewed: Cultural Strategic Investment Fund, Public Library Operating Grants, Public Library Pay Equity, Community Museum Operating Grant and Community Museum Pay Equity. In 2006-07, these programs will be reviewed: Provincial Heritage Organization Operating Grant, Heritage Organization Development Grant, First Nations Development Grant, Library Strategic Development Fund and Community Information Centres Pay Equity.

Employment

Commitment:

The ministry will ensure the new Ministry of Government Services E-module (on-line) training tool for the procurement provisions of the ODA 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.

Action:

A communication and follow-up process will be established to advise procurement employees of their responsibility to review the MBS on-line E-module training.

Develop a process to establish annual review/maintenance activities for procurement, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address.

Determine a schedule of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team. Establish a process to incorporate quantitative measurements into the reports, e.g., number of procurement staff vs. those trained on E-module, purchases reviewed for accessibility.

Timeframe

Follow-ups will be done in 2005-06 to track completion of the E-module training by existing and new procurement managers/staff.

The process of establishing annual review activities, reporting schedule and items to be quantified will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year. Reports on prioritized identified barriers will be done throughout the year and may continue into 2006-07.

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.

Action:

Develop a process to establish annual review/maintenance activities, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address.

Determine a schedule of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team. Establish a process to incorporate quantitative measurements into the reports, e.g., number of new/existing job descriptions revised, on-line training sessions done, applicant/employee accessibility requests accommodated.

Timeframe:

The process of establishing annual review activities, reporting schedule and items to be quantified will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year. Reports on prioritized identified barriers will be done throughout the year and may continue into 2006-07.

Commitment:

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

Action:

Get input from the Accessibility Planning Team about its current status, where it is at in its life cycle and, from this, set goals to ensure the Team continues to be effective in its operations.

Timeframe:

Set this topic as an agenda item at an early meeting of the new planning year, to establish goals to be carried out in 2005-06.

Commitment:

Program/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, i.e., MCL Accessibility Policy; programs and services; mechanism to review new programs/ policies to be accessible; accessibility issues addressed in the RBP, and submissions to central agencies.

Action:

Identify the programs/activities to be maintained. Develop a process to establish annual review activities, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address.

Determine a schedule of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team. Establish a process to incorporate quantitative measurements into the reports, e.g., the number of new media through which MCL policy is communicated, programs/ policies and Management Board submissions reviewed for accessibility.

Timeframe:

The process of establishing annual review activities, reporting schedule and items to be quantified will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year. Reports on prioritized identified barriers will be done throughout the year and may continue into 2006-07.

Commitment:

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

Action:

Identify the types of services to be provided. Develop a process to establish an annual plan of activity and any resulting communications, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address. A schedule will be determined of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team, with follow-up

action determined by the Team. Establish a process to incorporate quantitative measurements into the reports.

Timeframe:

The process of identifying services and establishing a plan for annual activities/communications, reporting schedule and items to be quantified will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year. Reports on prioritized identified barriers will be done throughout the year and may continue into 2006-07.

Commitment:

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

Action:

A sub-group will complete development of a proposed survey. It will then be carried out with the involvement of ministry staff. The resulting data will be compiled and reviewed to formulate proposals for increasing staff awareness and training.

Timeframe:

The survey, data summary, and proposals for staff awareness and training will be completed in 2005-06. As this will be a learning process for the Accessibility Planning Team this year, the data will be used by the Ministry in its 2006-07 accessibility planning to develop and report on performance measures for addressing staff and client satisfaction with accessibility improvements.

Communications and Information

Commitment:

Communications-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., Internet content, working with Publications Ontario, TTY service, 1-800 service, website links, the list of interpreters and signers, opportunities for staff identification of barriers, and intranet.

Action:

Develop a process to establish annual review/maintenance activities, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address. Determine a schedule of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team. Establish a process to incorporate quantitative measurements into the reports, e.g., number of calls/hits by users of accessible communication services, and alternate publication format requests.

Timeframe:

The process of establishing annual review activities, reporting schedule and items to be quantified will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year. Reports on prioritized identified barriers will be done throughout the year and may continue into 2006-07.

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.

Action:

Establish a process to work with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, whereby the sub-group responsible will monitor and report on MCI initiatives. Once established, a regular agenda item will be set at Accessibility Planning Team meetings to review initiatives for sharing/implementing with staff and key industry partners/stakeholders.

Timeframe:

The process will be established and begun this year. Any initiatives for review will be reported on at Accessibility Planning meetings, for discussion and possible action.

Commitment:

The ministry will update agencies about new or changed regulations/standards relating to the obligations of agencies 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.

Action:

Ministry staff will forward information to agencies about their obligations under accessibility legislation, as prescribed/released. New information on accessibility opportunities will be communicated to agencies as part of the Awareness and Education Campaign (see the above commitment).

Timeframe:

When regulations/standards are prescribed for agencies, the ministry will follow up with them.

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.

Action:

Each unit/branch will identify their materials to be reviewed (for clients or employees, in the form of websites, publications, manuals, etc.).

Develop a process to review the list of materials, for the purpose of making a prioritized list of accessibility issues, and developing an implementation plan for identified barriers that are reasonable to address.

Timeframe:

The review process will be presented to the Accessibility Planning Team in the first half of the 2005-06 year.

The list for review in 2005-06 will be made up of materials that the unit/branch identifies as key information/advice used by the public. Remaining documents will be considered for a 2006-07 list. Any materials identified that need rewriting will have a timeline set for completion and re-issue of the material, which may continue into 2006-07.

Commitment:

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

Action:

Organize at least two information sessions, either formal (staff meetings) or informal (lunch & learn) talks, with representatives from intellectual, mental health and learning disability organizations, for the purpose of educating staff and building awareness about the types of disabilities, devices to assist people, and proper ways to interact, etc. Research, report and make recommendations for implementation about available training in these areas for managers and staff, e.g., at upcoming all-staff days, SMG days.

Timeframe:

The information sessions will be conducted this year.

Built Environment***Commitment:***

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

Action:

Institute a process where, for each barrier identified, the ministry will:

- request that Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) and Profac provide recommendations and cost estimates for removing remaining barriers from program spaces (i.e., occupied solely by the ministry);
- consult with ORC and Profac on the feasibility, legal and financial responsibility issues of making changes to barriers in related public areas (i.e., shared with other occupants and tenants in a building).

Determine a schedule of regular reporting to the Accessibility Planning Team.

Timeframe

This is an ongoing process to increase accessibility to and within ministry-occupied premises and related public spaces.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Existing 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.

Action:

Acts or regulations currently under review or new ones proposed to go forward will similarly be reviewed.

Timeframe:

As acts or regulations are drafted or reviewed.

For More Information

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

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

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

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web site at: <http://www.mcass.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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