

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

*2006-2007
Accessibility Plan*



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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Message from the Minister	2
Report on Achievements	4
2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives.....	4
Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives	7
Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers	11
Customer service	11
Employment	11
Communications and information.....	11
Built environment	12
Acts and regulations.....	12
Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed	13
Customer service	13
Employment accommodation	14
Communications and information.....	15
Built environment	16
Acts and regulations.....	17
For More Information	18

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-06 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



Hon. David Caplan:

Every Ontarian should have the opportunity to learn, work and play to his or her full potential.

That conviction is at the heart of the landmark legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and I am pleased to help advance its goals by presenting my ministry's 2006 – 2007 Accessibility Plan, the second such plan we have published.

The success of our previous plan encourages us to continue to look for better ways to meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with our ministry—staff, members of the general public and ministry stakeholders.

To identify, remove and prevent barriers, we are working in partnership at all levels: within the ministry, across the government and with our stakeholders. I am proud to report that we are making progress in customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

Since my ministry intends to lead by example, educating staff remains a high priority. In the past year, employees have been surveyed to assess their knowledge of accessibility issues. Staff have also attended special sessions to increase awareness, and we are ensuring that managers complete online training about the legislation. We continue to improve the accessibility of our internet and intranet sites and provide effective support mechanisms and equipment for ministry staff.

Our accomplishments give pride to all of us at my ministry, yet at the same time, we are equally aware that much more must be done. I remain optimistic for these reasons: the quality of our partnerships, the dedication of staff at all levels and the strength of our collective desire to create a barrier-free Ontario—for all Ontarians.

I welcome your comments and encourage you to use the contact information at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

Hon. David Caplan
Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal

Report on Achievements

2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal was successful in achieving many of the planned commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Customer Service

Commitment: Procedures for how to respond to requests for accessible formats will be available on intranet for staff.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Ministry ODA intranet page has been updated and reflects current information.

Commitment: Continue to ensure that all new information posted on the existing inter/intranet sites is fully accessible to people with disabilities as required by Section 6 of the ODA.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: All material to be posted on the intranet/internet sites is reviewed for accessibility to people with disabilities.

Commitment: Conduct an employee survey to assess level of knowledge about accessibility issues.

Status: Completed

Action: Survey developed and conducted, and results rolled up and summarized. Findings included that: 72% of respondents were somewhat to very familiar with the ODA, most staff felt it was important for all staff to know

about it, 67% preferred to learn more through the intranet, and 72% felt that their workplace would accommodate a person with a disability.

Timeframe: Survey conducted in Fall 2005.

Commitment: Promote emergency and evacuation procedures to encourage staff who may require assistance to identify themselves to their managers.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Information on emergency and evacuation procedures, including self-identification, is communicated to staff on an ongoing basis through e-mails, phone calls, meetings, etc.

Employment

Commitment: Promote staff awareness of accessibility issues and the ODA through Lunch and Learn sessions.

Status: Completed

Action: Lunch and Learn sessions planned and offered to staff in Fall 2005.

Timeframe: Lunch and Learn sessions held in Fall 2005.

Commitment: All new job descriptions will be reviewed for language and content that respects people with disabilities.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Human Resources reviews all job descriptions to ensure that language and content respect people with disabilities.

Communications and Information

Commitment: Continue to provide publications in accessible formats to the public and members of staff.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Alternate formats for publications are investigated and made available, upon request.

Commitment: The Ministry will actively encourage the agencies that report to it to develop accessibility policies in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ODA.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Agencies are encouraged to develop accessibility policies.

Built Environment

Commitment: Continue to work with the Ontario Realty Corporation and building management to ensure barriers are identified in common areas and are addressed and eliminated.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Barrier-free standards are applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal was successful in achieving ongoing commitments described in the accessibility plans it issued before 2005 - 2006. This section provides a status report.

Customer Service

Commitment: As PIR develops future infrastructure funding programs, the ministry will seek to ensure that program eligibility criteria reflect accessibility requirements, where appropriate. This will ensure that infrastructure projects that receive funding have considered accessibility objectives as part of the planning process.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: The Ministry will ensure that commitment to and compliance with the ODA objectives is included in program criteria and as part of the application process for future infrastructure funding programs.

Employment

Commitment: Ensure that new managers and staff with leadership responsibility are updated on ODA requirements.

Status: Ongoing

Action: All new managers are advised to obtain online ODA training and compliance is assessed through follow-up.

Commitment: PIR will ensure that new staff are aware of the ministry's commitment to accessibility, accommodation and other objectives of the ODA.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Orientation programs for new employees include accessibility awareness components, and information on ways to self-identify accommodation requirements on a confidential basis.

Commitment: All future job advertisements will be reviewed for content and language that respect people with disabilities.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Human Resources reviews all job advertisements to ensure consistency with the requirements of the ODA.

Commitment: Ensure barrier free access for employment competitions and interviews.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Interview facilities are barrier-free in most cases; in others, alternative arrangements are available and offered.

Communications and Information

Commitment: PIR will honour ODA requirements in the procurement of goods and services.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: Procurement guidelines with accessibility requirements are in place and available to managers and supervisors to promote compliance.

Built Environment

Commitment: PIR will ensure that its accommodation planning results in barrier-free access to members of the public as well as for staff.

Status: Completed and ongoing

Action: The Ministry follows corporate guidelines on accessibility and continues to review PIR facilities to ensure that ODA requirements are met.

Acts and Legislation

Commitment: PIR will ensure that the intent of the ODA is addressed in the development of any future legislation or regulations.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Legislation and regulations meet the objectives and requirements of the ODA.

Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the ministry commits to take the following steps to prevent new barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

- Address accessibility requirements in all new contracts that are negotiated with service providers.
- Ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered when reviewing emergency and evacuation procedures on an annual/semi-annual basis and communicating them to all staff.
- Continue to include compliance with ODA objectives in program criteria for future infrastructure funding programs, where appropriate

Employment

- Promote new staff's awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting the Accessibility Plan and related information and links on the intranet site, and including information in orientation binders and sessions.
- Ensure that all new managers are made aware of and complete online ODA training.
- Ensure that the content and language of all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with ODA requirements and respect people with disabilities.

Communications and information

- Ensure that all new information posted on existing and new inter/intranet sites is fully accessible to people with disabilities by following government web guidelines and using appropriate technology.
- Provide new publications in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Ensure that staff engaging in procurement activities are made aware of accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines to promote compliance.

- Continue to encourage agencies to develop accessibility policies that reflect the intent of the ODA.

Built environment

- Apply barrier-free standards to all new building projects and maintenance activities.
- Follow ergonomic standards in the procurement of all furniture and furniture accessories.

Acts and regulations

- Ensure that new Acts and regulations use appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities and meet the objectives of the ODA.

Commitments —

Barriers to be Addressed

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Barrier: Business continuity planning may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Commitment: Consider and address the needs of people with disabilities when reviewing, updating and testing the Ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan.

Responsibility: Jennette Frost, Director, Service Management Branch

Timeline: Plan is reviewed annually

Barrier: Services and products offered by service providers may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Commitment: All new service level agreements that are negotiated with service providers will consider and address accessibility requirements.

Responsibility: Cynthia Iskiw, Manager, Shared Services, Service Management Branch

Timeline: Ongoing

Barrier: Services and products obtained by Ministry business areas through procurement activities may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Commitment: Promote awareness of and compliance with accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines.

Responsibility: Robert Maieron, Coordinator, Advisory Services, Service Management Branch provides advice and guidance. All staff engaging in procurement activities are responsible for compliance.

Timeline: Ongoing

Employment accommodation

Barrier: People with disabilities may not be able to access government jobs.

Commitment: Review all new job descriptions and job advertisements to ensure that the content and language are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities, and that barrier-free interview facilities are made available. Provide job descriptions and job ads in an accessible format, upon request.

Responsibility: Kate Johnstone, Manager, Workforce Planning and Information

Timeline: Ongoing

Barrier: Managers may not recognize and accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities.

Commitment: All new managers are to complete online ODA training, and offer accommodations to staff.

Responsibility: All Ministry managers are responsible for taking the training. Service Management Branch will promote awareness and compliance through advisory and follow-up communications.

Timeline: Ongoing

Barrier: Staff may lack awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues.

Commitment: Promote new staff's awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting updated ODA-related information (including the most current Accessibility Plan) and links on the Ministry's intranet site.

Responsibility: Irwin Barrer, Web, Production and Visual Identity Coordinator, Communications Branch

Timeline: Ongoing

Communications and information

Barrier: The ministry's websites may be inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Commitment: Ensure that the ministry's public websites are accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with Section 6 of the ODA. Endeavour to accommodate the accessibility needs of public sector employees in developing the new intranet sub-site for corporate services.

Responsibility: Jennette Frost, Director, Service Management Branch (for development of intranet sub-site's content) and Irwin Barrer, Web, Production

and Visual Identity Coordinator, Communications Branch (for accessibility of PIR public websites)

Timeline: Ongoing

Barrier: People with disabilities may not be able to access ministry publications.

Commitment: Provide ministry publications in accessible formats to the public and members of staff, upon request.

Responsibility: Irwin Barrer, Web, Production and Visual Identity Coordinator, Communications Branch

Timeline: Ongoing

Built environment

Barrier: Offices and common areas may not be accessible to people with disabilities.

Commitment: Work with building management and accommodation service providers to ensure that barrier-free standards are applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance, common areas are kept free of obstacles, ergonomic furniture is procured, and special tools/equipment are obtained to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Responsibility: Jasna Boyd, Vice President, Account Executive, Ontario Realty Corporation

Timeline: Ongoing

Acts and regulations

Barrier: Acts and regulations may not use appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities and meet the objectives of the ODA.

Commitment: Review new and existing Acts and regulations to ensure the appropriate use of language and to identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

Responsibility: Victoria Vidal-Ribas, Director, Legal Services

Timeline: Ongoing

For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number:	In Toronto 416-325-0424
TTY number:	711 for Bell Relay service to Access 1-800-239-4224
1-800 number:	1-800-239-4224
E-mail:	suzana.ristich@energy.gov.on.ca
Ministry website address:	www.pir.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcss.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. 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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